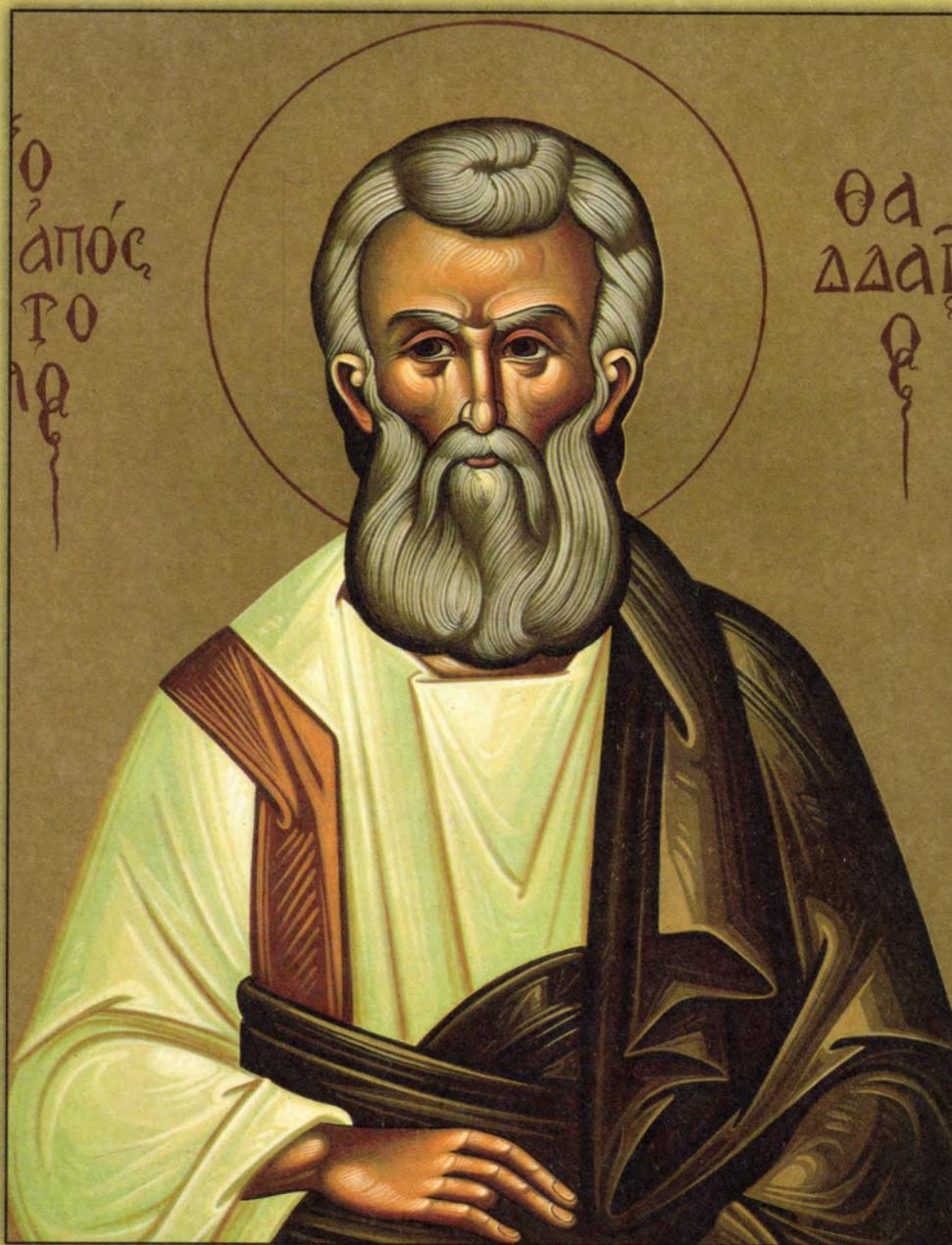


TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



*Icon of Saint Thaddeus -- August 21*

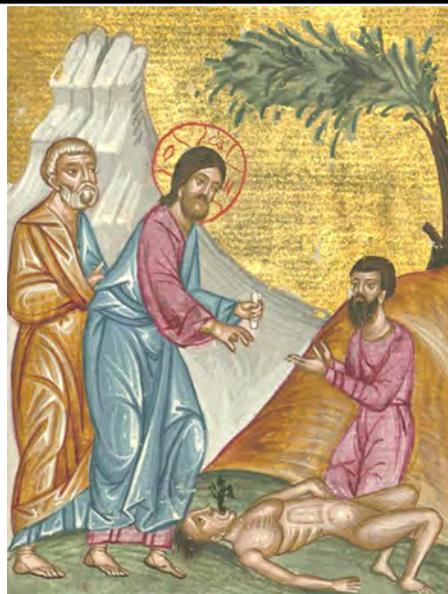
## A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this 10th weekend after Pentecost, our readings are taken again from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians and Matthew's Gospel. Paul characterizes the early followers of Jesus as being persecuted and tells us and the Corinthians that he is writing in this manner not to shame his readers but to admonish them to truly be followers of Christ. He asks them and us to be "imitators" of Jesus. What he suggests is that because Jesus went through the pain and suffering that He did, we should be prepared to do the same. Why? Because pain and suffering can, if accepted in the appropriate way, bring about spiritual growth. Jesus truly became the God incarnate when He endured the suffering, pain and challenges that He did. He demonstrated for us the path of spiritual growth.

Our Gospel miracle story is about Jesus curing the "possessed" boy. As the story is told, the man brought his son to the disciples and asked them to cure the boy. They were unable to cure the boy and so the father brought the boy to Jesus, Who cured the boy.

Later the disciples, who believed that Jesus had given them the power to expel demons, asked Jesus why they could not dispel the demons in the boy. Jesus responded that "faith" is needed, first of all, and then a spiritual life of prayer and fasting.

This gives us a clue about how to live the spiritual life. It must be a life of faith which finds expression in prayer and fasting. The prayer and fasting makes the faith "real" and "concrete" - they make faith real. So, if I say that I believe, I must do things that truly demonstrate that I believe. Prayer and fasting



give an indication of belief. Indeed prayer and fasting are a part of making "faith" real to us. They are essential. When I decide to freely pray and fast, it says that I truly believe.

We must always remember that faith is "believing" in things that we cannot prove - it is saying that the things that we cannot prove are true. Prayer and fasting gives strength to that faith. We say, although I cannot prove the things I believe are true, I believe they are true.

This is one of the reasons why prayer and fasting are so very important in our Church and in our lives.

# SIGNS OF A DYNAMIC EASTERN CHRISTIAN

So the first sign of a Dynamic Catholic, in particular an Eastern Catholic, is the practice of daily and/or frequent prayer. There are, however, various forms of prayer. I like to think of prayer is “frequent” thoughts about God and my relationship with God. Prayer, as I truly understand it, is the form of communication that transpires among friends and/or persons we are in a relationship with. It doesn’t have to be formal. It is about “building an awareness” that the other person exists, in this case God. That’s why I believe it has many forms. It is not about just reciting some memorized prayers that someone else has written. It is about turning your hearts and minds over to the Other. The more frequent the moments, the more engaged you are in the relationship.

The Eastern Church’s “Jesus Prayer”, which can also take many different forms, is an example. It can consist of simply saying the name JESUS, or one of the variations. The traditional Jesus prayer is: *Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner*. It has a long history in the Eastern Church. It is meant to help us lift our hearts and minds to God in the Person of Jesus, the Christ. If I lift my mind and heart to Jesus I am, in effect, lifting my heart and mind to the Holy Trinity Who is named: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

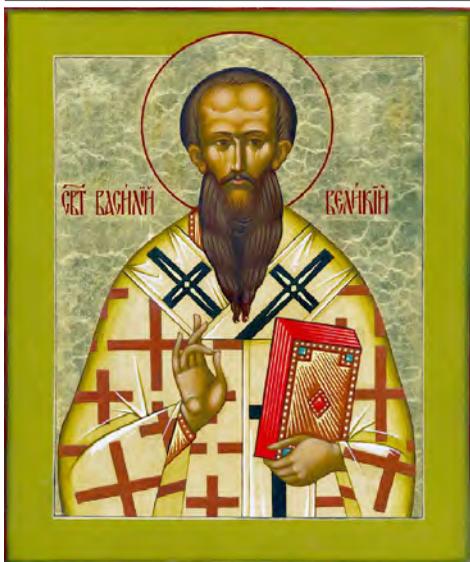
Prayer can also mean just spending time alone and thinking about the life that is within me and then making the faith statement to myself that the life within me is God’s own LIFE shared with me. Again, this is a faith prayer - a statement of my belief in the presence of God within me. This is an important prayer! So we must find ways to frequently “life our hearts and minds” to God.



## ST. MARY MAGDALENE

Prayer is the expression of my awareness of the spiritual dimension! There is truly something beyond this world. There is a spiritual dimension. Prayer recognizes this. It states that this is true - there is a reality beyond our physical world. As my awareness of this dimension becomes more and more real, I become more and more dynamic in my way of living. I want to be God’s co-worker in making His Kingdom real, here and now. I want to be a bearer of unconditional love and forgiveness and truly respect others and creation.

## ST BASIL'S THOUGHTS ON GENESIS



### ST BASIL THE GREAT

The fact that Genesis indicates that God granted to humans His authority to rule over all of creation, is astonishing. It was a breathtaking challenge to the cultural *status quo*, It elevated the humble and common person to a hitherto unimagined height and democratized the *imago Dei* (image of God). Each person walking the earth had a dignity no one had dreamt of.

After creating *adam* in His own image, both the man and the woman, God blessed them. To bless means to confer vitality and fertility. If a man and his wife were blessed, their garners were full, their sheep

becoming thousands and tens of thousands in their field and their cattle many. Thus when God blessed the newly created *adam*, both male and female, He said to them, ***Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and rule.*** We note here that fruitfulness (i.e., sex) is inextricably linked with the image of God: it is because God made *adam* both **male and female** that they could be fruitful and multiply. They could **subdue** the earth because they had first **filled** it. Their functioning as God's image - ruling and subduing the earth - depended upon their first multiplying and filling the earth. Sexuality is thus not foreign to the divine image in *adam* but foundational to it.

The ruling and subduing of the earth, however, did not imply force or violence. Some moderns have criticized the Genesis narrative for laying the foundation for the industrial rape of the earth and the selfish depletion and exploitation of its resources. However blame for such injustices and abuses may be apportioned, no one may justly lay such blame at the door of the Genesis narrator. The verbs denoting ruling and subduing (Hebrew: *radah* and *kabash*) do not imply violence or exploitation. The verb for *rule* (*radah*) is the same verb used when a shepherd rules his flock or a king his dominions. It can be done harshly and with force or lovingly and justly. Man is called to subdue the land in that he is to till and keep it, bending it to his will and making it fruitful and safe from thorns and thistles. Man is the "steward of God's creation."

***It is all a matter of how you interpret the text!***

# St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



## A HEART-FELT WELCOME

I would, on behalf of the entire St. Michael's Community, extend a true WELCOME to

### Michael J. Blumenau

into our fellowship. We ask Almighty God to shower His blessings upon Michael and pray that we, as a parish, may be a source of spiritual growth for him.

**GOD GRANT HIM MANY YEARS!**

\*\*\*\*\*

## TODAY'S FEAST

Although celebrated this past Thursday, August 15th, today we also celebrate the Feast of the DORMITION of Mary, the Mother of God. Hopefully as you left our church building today, you noticed the ICON of the feast which is over our inside doors.

\*\*\*\*\*

"In the book of life,  
the answers aren't  
in the back."

- Charlie Brown



## A CALL TO HOLINESS

As I thought about what I wrote in the last issue of this article, I realized that I said, in effect, that the Call to Holiness is a call to not accept our society's values but, rather, to truly and completely accept the values of Jesus as expressed through the Gospels and writings of the New Testament (NT).



Christianity has been, from its very beginning, countercultural. Jesus called His followers to not accept the "ways" of Judaism as it was being practiced BUT, rather, to think about the values inherent in Judaism and to learn to live in accord with them. I believe that we are at a time which is very similar to that in which Jesus lived. We have to think about what our religion teaches us and to attempt to live according to those values instead of the values of our society.

For example, Jesus talked about loving one's enemies. What is our society telling us about this? Jesus said to love others who may not conform to our standards or beliefs. What is our society saying about this?

I believe that it is essential that we embrace the Christian message - the true message of Jesus Christ, even though it might be a challenge. (Continued on page 8)

## INQUIRING MINDS: QUESTIONS FROM READERS

**THE QUESTION:** Why is Jesus called the only-begotten of the Father? He is the **begotten** of the Father, that is eternally **begotten**. Meaning he originates with the Father, but **not** in a sense where he once didn't exist. His origin is **not** temporal, but relational. Thus He is understood as the eternally **begotten**, **not** created, Son of God. The emphasis, however, is not placed on the “begotten”, but rather the uniqueness of Jesus, the Christ, being the Son, the human image of God. Something is **begotten** when it's been generated by procreation — in other words, it's been fathered. A somewhat old fashioned adjective, **begotten** is the past participle of the verb **beget**, which **means** to father or produce an offspring.

The Nicene Creed was affirmed at the first Council of Nicaea (325 CE). The council was called to settle a dispute about Christ's relationship to the Father. This disagreement had been sparked by the teaching of Arius, a church leader from Alexandria, who said Jesus was neither eternal nor divine but had been created by God the Father before the world was made.

The Nicene Creed countered this false teaching by describing Christ as “begotten not made” and as being “of one substance with the Father.” The creed echoed what Scripture had already revealed. John characterizes Jesus as God's “one and only” Son five times in the New Testament (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9). This language emphasizes



Jesus' unique relationship to the Father; it does not imply that God created Him. Similar language is used to refer to Abraham's son Isaac (Heb. 11:17). Isaac was not Abraham's only son, but he was unique because of his relationship to God's promise. Isaac was the only son who fulfilled God's promise to Abraham.

Jesus' relationship with God as His only begotten Son affirms the deity of Jesus. John emphasized Christ's eternally divine nature by noting that Jesus already existed in the beginning as God.

***This is truly a very important question to be answered. More to come!***

## THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL: NICAEA (325)

In 359-60 CE Emperor Constantius called two councils, which met and sent delegations to him. Under pressure from Constantius these meetings promulgated a creed which was Homosian. Constantius intended this creed to function as a universal point of reference and a universal confession of faith. In this we see the function of the Emperor. He was the head of the Church and the State and he wanted quiet in the Empire. Many opponents of the creed (including prominent Homoiousians such as Basil of Ancyra himself) were exiled at this point.

In the wake of this seeming *Homoian* triumph, the 360s were actually a period in which a variety of different groups began to coalesce around the Nicene creed as the only alternative that would unite those opposed to the *Homoian* creed. Athanasius and his supporters were able to recognize as orthodox the theologies of some who had previously supported a broadly *Homoiousian* position and others from the broad eastern tradition that had previously opposed him. One key tactic followed in this rapprochement and promoted by Athanasius was to ask for confession of Nicaea as a sign of orthodoxy but to refrain from inquiring further (Basil of Caesarea is one who eventually followed Athanasius' policy here directly). At the same time many western theologians also followed



Athanasius' lead. Athanasius and the others who were prepared to coalesce around Nicaea also had to be clear about the principles within which it could be understood, admitting that none of them wished to divide God's immaterial being or treat the persons as other than truly distinct from each other. During these two decades we also see the beginnings of an evolution of terminologies that will distinguish what in God is one from what is three: a statement that God is one in nature, power, glory or essence is combined with a statement that there are three persons, hypostases, or 'things'. This balance of statement is understood as the context for interpreting Nicaea's terminology and marks the full emergence of 'pro-Nicene' theology. This last development also occurs through polemic against some groups who doubted the full divinity of the Spirit.

Our faith in God as Trinity and Jesus as God came only through much discussion and truly consensus.

# Schedule of Services

**Sunday, August 18 - Tenth Weekend After Pentecost - TONE 1**  
**10:00 AM - Enrollment of Michael Blumenau into the Church**

## **ELEVENTH WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - TONE 2**

Monday, August 19 - Andrew & Others, Martyrs  
No Service Scheduled

Tuesday, August 20 - Samuel, Prophet  
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday, August 21 - Thaddeus, Apostle  
No Service Scheduled

Thursday, August 22 - Agathonicus & Others, Martyrs  
No Service Scheduled

Friday, August 23 - Lupus, Martyr  
No Service Scheduled

Saturday, August 24 - Eutyches, Bishop-Martyr  
No Service Scheduled

**Sunday, August 25 - Eleventh Weekend After Pentecost - TONE 2**  
**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)*

**Why? Because this is the only way that we can be changed or transformed. It is critical, I believe, that we embrace the "WAY OF JESUS" if we want to secure "eternal life." It is not a matter of just being "good" and not breaking certain laws. It is a matter of being authentic humans who understand that this earthly life is given to us to "grow in our likeness of Jesus Who is the prototype of what we humans are to be like, according to God's Divine Plan." Why are we here right now? To spiritually grow! How do we spiritually grow? By looking at how Jesus lived and trying, to the best of our ability and with the help of God's Spirit, to live and think like Jesus, the Christ.**

***DO YOU UNDERSTAND THIS?***



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

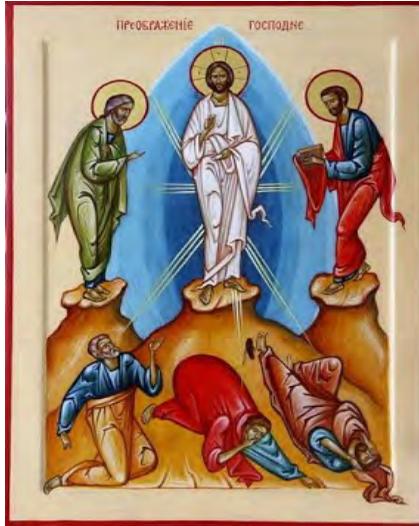
# THIS IS MY BELOVED SON

Christianity, the author maintains, is not a philosophical system, a set of rules and laws, or an intellectual edifice that attempts to explain the world to us. It is instead a “way of life”, an insight that flows out of living experience, which includes things we see, touch and understand, and also things that we do not comprehend even if we see and touch them. Christianity is at its most essential in the mystical sound of the heartbeat of the Church, the breath of its saints and the presence of the Bridegroom Christ just on the other side of our senses.

The continuous Transfiguration of Christ in the Church is one of those things. And if this is difficult to visualize, we can start from the biblical message itself: if we put ourselves in the place of the three apostles who witnessed this miracle we would have no words to describe or explain it. The narratives are revealing and elusive at the same time. “His face shone like the sun” and his clothes “became shining, exceedingly white, like snow; such as no launderer on earth can whiten them”. There is a lot that serious analysis can tell us about

these passages, but if we pause for a moment and try to visualize the raw experience, we come at a loss. And if we did manage to visualize it to some small extent, it would be even more difficult to describe it.

There is much to be learned by approaching the Transfiguration, as well as the theological and biblical tradition in general, in the language of symbols and images. There is much in the Bible that can be understood in a lateral, iconological way. We can consider the image of Jesus in John 8:6, writing on the ground with his finger, when the adulterous woman is brought in front of him. This is the

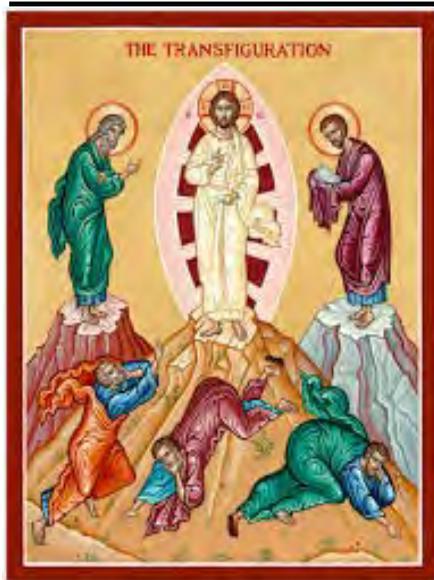


## THE TRANSFIGURATION

only instance where the Bible says that he ever wrote anything - and nobody was even interested in what he wrote. This is not an image of indifference, though, quite the opposite. Here we have a dispute about the Mosaic Law, and Jesus is invited by the scribes and Pharisees to offer his interpretation. What follows goes against the moralistic and legalistic understanding of sacred tradition, as it was held by the scribes and Pharisees. Does Jesus have the authority to do this?

***More to follow!***

## UNDERSTANDING THEOSIS - DEIFICATION



I have been sharing Maximus' understanding of *Theosis*. Maximus does make an ontological (i.e., relating to the branch of metaphysics dealing with the nature of being) distinction between Christ and creature: in the former, "there dwells in bodily form the complete fullness of deity by essence," while "in us the fullness of deity dwells by grace whenever we have formed in ourselves every virtue and wisdom... in faithful reproduction of the archetype." So we only become "like" Christ when we totally embrace His way of thinking and behaving. We never become Christ. We only

become "like" Him. But that is the purpose of the earthly existence - to become more "like" Christ. That is, to begin to truly imitate His way of thinking and behaving, making sure that we are trying, with God's help, to make His Kingdom real here and now. We do this when we learn how to unconditionally love and forgive all other human beings that come into our lives, even for a moment. These are the primary qualities of Jesus. He showed us how to unconditionally love and forgive.

For the Confessor, the union of God and the believer is fulfilled while preserving the differences between the two distinct natures," analogous to the sustained integrity of the two natures - and the energies issuing from them - in the person of Christ. Hence, although created in the image of God, human nature has yet to be fulfilled through the hypostatic union (union of natures) realized in the Christ incarnate.

For he did not come to debase the nature which He Himself, as God and Word, had made, but He came that the nature might be thoroughly deified which, with the good please of the Father and the co-operation of the Spirit, He willed to unite to Himself in one and the same *hypostasis*.

This all means that we must look at who we are very closely. God has created us in His image and unto His likeness so that we might grow through the way that we respond to the various "challenges" of life. This earthly life is not a "test" but, rather, a "multitude of real opportunities" to grow as children of God. Its all about using the opportunities that confront us in life to grow in our awareness that God is within us and that are His adopted children.



# THE EASTERN HERALD

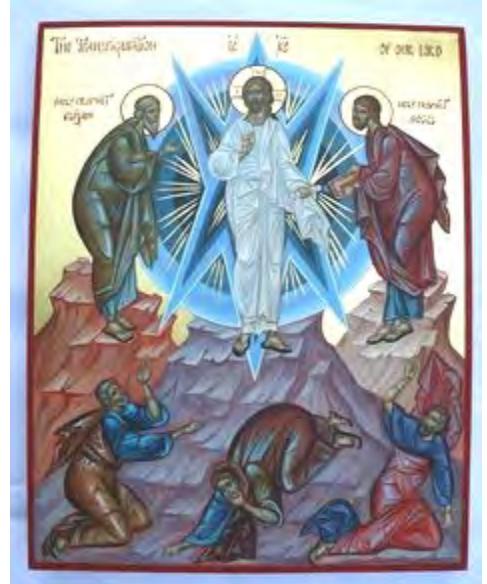
## СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.  
Vol. 65 No 33 TENTH WEEKEND AFTER PENTECOST August 17-18, 2019

### THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN EAST

One of the main differences between Eastern and Western theologies has been the prominence of a pneumatological outlook (i.e., in Christianity refers to a particular discipline within Christian theology that focuses on the study of the Holy Spirit. The English term **pneumatology** comes from two Greek words: πνεῦμα [pneuma, spirit] and λόγος [logos, teaching about]) in the East. As a result, the Eastern doctrine of salvation has come to be expressed in balanced pneumato-Christological terms. The Protestant Reformation doctrine of salvation is open to pneumatological perspectives even though it easily lends itself primarily to Christological categories.

What is this saying? In the West the emphasis is placed primarily on belief in Jesus Christ and what He did to bring about the possibility of human salvation. In the East it is not just about belief in Jesus but also about believing that God's Spirit is also truly involved in human salvation. Again, in Eastern theology God always acts as a Trinity: It is the Father, through the Son **IN THE HOLY SPRIT**, that things are accomplished. It is the Eastern idea that man, believing in Christ, tries to live like Christ and in the Person of the Holy Spirit that allows the person to cooperate with God's grace and bring about the true transformation required



### THE TRANSFIGURATION

for salvation. There is a reason, according to Eastern theology, why God created us humans with a free will. While He always honors our free will, He continuously calls us to a deeper relationship with Him. He doesn't stop loving us, however, if we don't respond to His call for a relationship. He only, as a good Father, keeps calling us to relationship with Him. *What do you think?*

### *Say To this Mountain, Move*

The disciples seem to me to be in anxiety and fear that they had lost the grace with which they had been entrusted. For they had received power over unclean demons.

So they approached Him in private and asked Him the question, not out of shame (for if the matter had got out and they were criticized, it would have been superfluous for the future to have been ashamed of admitting it in their words) but because what they were going to ask Him was secret and of great moment.

What, then, does Christ say? "Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here

to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you." But if you say "Where did they move a mountain?" I will say that they did things much greater than that in raising up innumerable dead. For moving a mountain and moving death from a body are not at all comparable.

After them, other saints, far inferior to the disciples, are said to have moved mountains when necessity demanded. It is clear that the disciples also would have done so had necessity demanded. But if there was never need at that time, do not find fault with them.

*St. John Chrysostom*