

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of the 40 Women of Macedonia and Ammon -- September 1st

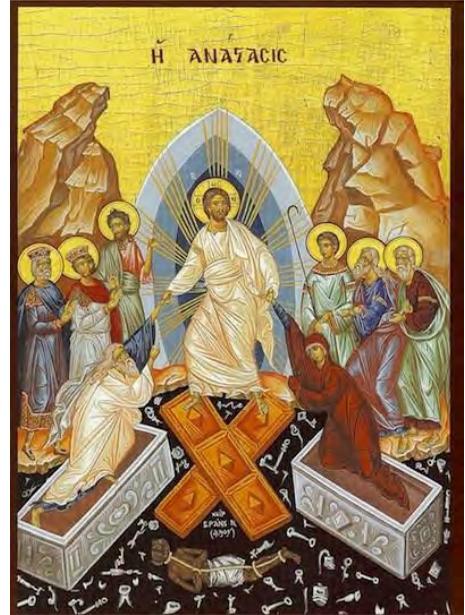
A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this twelfth weekend after Pentecost, our readings are again taken from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians and St. Matthew's Gospel which relates another teaching of Jesus about "riches". I would first consider the reading that we heard from St. Paul Letter to the Corinthians.

Paul makes the argument that we should believe the 'Good News' because it's message is salvific. He tells us that if we live like Jesus lived, namely even loving our enemies, we will be transformed and attain eternal life. Think about it. If we can learn to love our enemies, we will be transformed. Please put this in the context of our current national context. Do we truly love our enemies? Or, because our society calls us to "hate" our enemies, do we not embrace the values of our society. Christ challenged us to love our enemies. What about this message does not resonate with you? It is unequivocal. Either you learn how to love your enemies or you do not.

I realize that it is difficult to ask Americans this question at this time! I only say: What would Jesus say and do?

The Gospel message is more pointed, I believe. In fact within the new "translations" of the New Testament, it is labeled "The Danger of Riches." I do believe that this title very definitely captures the intent of the section. Again it is casted as a "teaching" of Jesus. A man approaches Jesus and says: "Teacher, what good must I do to possess everlasting life?" Jesus' response, because He was a good Jew, responds: "keep the commandments." He then goes on to suggest what these basic commandments are. They all have to deal with



how we interact with others. Do we treat them as we want to be treated? Do we try to love them, unconditionally? Do we respond to them in a way that represents our faith and belief in Jesus Christ!

I realize that this is very difficult for Americans to truly accept in this very politicalized world. I do not say this with any political disposition. I only say this as a Christian. I would challenge you to look at the message of Jesus in the context of our social and political discourse. What do you think Jesus would say? How would He behave?

SIGNS OF A DYNAMIC EASTERN CHRISTIAN

Since the last issue of this article, I received an email message which told me that my words on “prayer” were very important. Prayer is very different for each person! Each person defines **how** they interact with God! One approach **DOES NOT** fit all! It is all about wanting, in your personal life, to be in contact with the most important person in your life, which is, hopefully, God.

To be a dynamic Eastern Christian means to be fully committed to your relationship to Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It means reaching out and “desiring” to be in relationship with God, Who is also Son and Holy Spirit. Our relationship with Him is complicated. He is Three-In-One! How do we relate to Him? He gave His only Son - the first-born of the human race - to show us how to relate to Him. It is all about relating to the Son, since He is our real and true connection to God, the Father-Creator. Christ brings us into relationship with the Father through our humanity. Jesus is the human representation of God, the Father. As He relates to the Father as a Son, He shows us how to relate to the Father. He relates to the Father by making the Father’s way of living the first and foremost intent in our life. I am called to relate to the Father as the Son, Jesus Christ, is related to the Father.

How is Jesus related to the Father? He is related through His behavior! The Father tells the Son to unconditional love others, regardless of how they treat you. Jesus does this! God the Father says love your enemies as yourselves! Jesus, our model, tells us to do the very same thing.

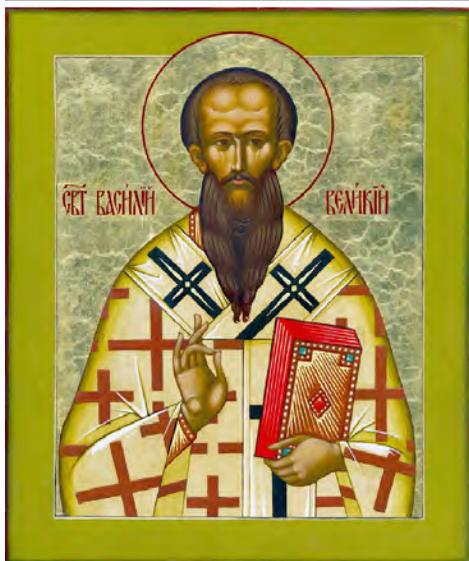
Jesus says us that the main thing in life is to TRUST God - to live in accord with the belief



ST. MARY MAGDALENE

that’s God’s desire is to only help us achieve eternal life! I would ask you: *Why would God create us and only wait for us to betray our belief in His love for us? No spiritual being is going to just wait for us to fail!* That is not the kind of God I believe in! I believe that our God is “loving” and “kind” and that He only wants us to come to a deep and real understanding of how much He really loves us. We only need to turn to Him in help. He will find the persons who will help us in His understanding in the meaning and purpose of life. *What do you believe?*

ST BASIL'S THOUGHTS ON GENESIS



ST BASIL THE GREAT

In the last issue of this article, I ended by sharing the fact that the Hebrew word *sabah*, is the usual word for “army” and in the plural it forms part of an almost technical title for God: Yahweh is *Yahweh Sabaoth*, “the Lord of Hosts.” But the phrase “the hosts of the earth” is nowhere found in Genesis. What can the use of the term *sabah* mean here?

The term seems to mean that just as the glory of a king is reflected in his vast army, so the glory of God is reflected in His vast creation, not just in the sun, moon and stars, but of everything upon the earth as well. A “host” is an organized,

disciplined body of men (like an army), and all the created cosmos stands in organized harmony, reflecting God’s order just as an army does.

By the seventh day God had finished His work that He had made on the previous six days, and so He ceased on the seventh day from all His work that He had made. There are two Hebrew words denoting work: one is *melaka*, describing the skilled work of a craftsman, and the other is *abodah*, describing the raw labor of the unskilled working man. Not surprisingly, the former word is used here (three times), for God had created the world with consummate skill and wisdom.

It is important to understand the statement that God ceased on the seventh day from all His work. If we think like moderns (an overworked moderns at that), we can misunderstand this cessation as God simply dropping His shovel and walking away from His creation job site to retire back to His place in heaven. This fails to see that the sacred text regards the cosmos as God’s temple. In the creation stories of the ancient Near East, after the deity created, he rested by taking up residence in his temple and from there continuing to oversee the creation. In the *Enuma Elish*, for example, after creating the world the deity says, “come, let us make something whose name shall be called ‘Sanctuary.’ It shall be a dwelling for our rest at night. Come, let us repose therein! There let us erect a throne dais. On the day that we arrive, we will repose in it.”

Do you see how Genesis counters other stories?

St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



NEW CHURCH YEAR

September 1st

Today marks the beginning of a new CHURCH YEAR. I would truly encourage my readers to take the time to make just a few RESOLUTIONS for this new year. What things will you do, during this coming year, to spiritually grow?

While most of us find it difficult to keep resolutions, if we at least make an effort to formulate a resolution, we are more likely to make some effort to keep it. Don't put off for tomorrow what we need to do today. Remember, we can never be sure about tomorrow.



A CALL TO HOLINESS

I ended the last issue of this article by asking: WHAT IS LIFE REALLY ALL ABOUT? I wonder if any of my readers stopped and tried to answer that very important question. I would ask again: What is life all about? It is all about REAL TRANSFORMATION, PERSONAL GROWTH AND TRUE CHANGE. We are not meant to leave this life the same way we came into it. Our knowledge about things, our psychological character, our spiritual selves have to be influenced by life. Life is all about growth and development. God created us in such a way that we can grow. He also created life in such a way that it will present to us all the challenges and struggles that support growth.



What is interesting, however, is that so many of us RESIST change and growth; so many of us don't believe that we have to change; so many of us are afraid of change. And, of course, the funny thing is that whether we are aware of it or not, we automatically change.

What God calls us to do, however, is to voluntarily embrace change and to intelligently guide our change so that it might positively influence our lives and not make them more complicated. (Continued on page 8)

INQUIRING MINDS: QUESTIONS FROM READERS

I have been trying to answer the question posed by one of my readers about why Jesus is called the “only-begotten.” I have suggested that the Greek word suggests his uniqueness. Several other passages in the New Testament make this very clear. For example, John 1:1-3 states, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” Colossians 1:15-17 also emphasizes Jesus creating all things.

The use of *monogenes* in John 3:16 is similar to what is seen in other passages of Scripture to refer to Jesus as unique. For example, John 1:14 shares, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:18 includes, “No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.” John 3:18 adds, “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.” First John 4:9 notes, “In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.”



The understanding that Jesus is completely unique, yet not a created being, was so important in the church that it was emphasized in one of the earliest creeds, the Nicene Creed: "I believe...in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made." This statement sought to make clear that Jesus is both eternal and is the one and only Son of God sent to offer salvation to the world

THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL: NICAEA (325)

I ended the last issue of this article by sharing that many different theologies came into existence as the Church wrestled with the most basic dogmas of our faith: our understanding of Who God is, Who Jesus Christ is, Who Mary is and, of course, What the Church is. These theologies, distinct but with shared themes and principles, take forward and produce some convergence among a number of different theological trajectories that run through the century. On the one hand, they incorporate developed versions of the broad eastern tradition that we find represented in some aspects of the Dedication creed and which so strongly opposed Marcellus. On the other hand, these theologies also incorporate trajectories such as Athanasius' own strongly unitarian account and much of the pro-Nicene western thought. By focusing on the shared logic of belief running between these trajectories, the emergence of pro-Nicene orthodoxy also functioned as a continual persuasion to each trajectory to seek convergence with the others. Various groups of non-Nicene Christians continued to be a real force within the Christian world through the next century, but increasingly they became distinct ecclesial groups with their own episcopal hierarchies and organizational structure.

As we see in our own day and age, there are a number of groups that call



themselves Christian but have very different beliefs. For example, it is only the Catholic and Orthodox confessions that still maintain the truths of the first seven ecumenical councils and there are differences between these two groups.

Consider this. The early Church, truly desirous to maintain the idea of monotheism (i.e., One God as opposed to polytheism, many gods) also truly realized that Jesus was someone very, very special - that He was God Himself in human form. So they had to come up with some way to express them, preserving the idea of monotheism and yet giving Jesus the status of God. This took a lot of thinking! Because many of the Fathers were schooled in Greek philosophy, they were able to find a way of expressing what they truly believed. This, of course, took more than 300 years to accomplish. The end result: God is Triune - Three Persons in One Nature and one of the Persons, the Son, also has two natures, divine and human!

Schedule of Services

Sunday, September 1 - 12th Weekend After Pentecost - TONE 3
10:00 AM - Eva Sikora; Taras Sikora

13th WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - TONE 4

Monday, September 2 - Mammas, Martyr
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Tuesday, September 3 - Anthimus, Bishop-Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday, September 4 - Babylas, Bishop-Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Thursday, September 5 - Zachary, Prophet & Elizabeth
8:00 AM - Special Intention

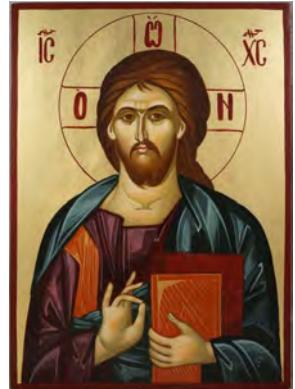
Friday, September 6 - Miracle of St. Michael the Archangel
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Saturday, September 7 - Weekend before the Exaltation
No Service Scheduled

Sunday, September 8 - Nativity of Mary the Mother of God
10:00 AM - Special Intention

(Continued from page 5 - the Call to holiness)

What I encounter so often is that because people don't want to take the responsibility for the change that comes in their lives, the changes are **negative** instead of **positive**. If we embrace a personal plan for change, which is what our faith calls us to do, we will find that our lives are enriched instead of depleted. If I personally embrace a plan for spiritual growth - a plan to become more like Jesus - my life is enriched. I begin to truly understand the meaning and purpose of life and my relationship with God and others. Working to become a saint - that is a person who has a greater understanding of life, I will find many, many positive benefits. AND I will have a deeper sense of the beauty of life.



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Pastor

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LITURGY SCHEDULE

Sundays @ 10:00 AM
Ukrainian & English

Weekdays @ 8:00 AM
English

SACRAMENTS

Penance
By Appointment

Baptism & Matrimony
*In most instances membership
required for six months*

Funerals
*Membership of an immediate family
member required*

Parish Life Council

Bob & Corinne Boyko
734.451.1893

John & Janet Dicky
586.755.3129

Daria Drobny
313.791-0292

Robert Krokosky
248.431.9554

Leo & Mary LaDouceur
313.278.7378

Gordon Malaniak
734.564.9817

Leonard Mier
313.584-6795

Greg & Esther Petrovich
734.453-4354

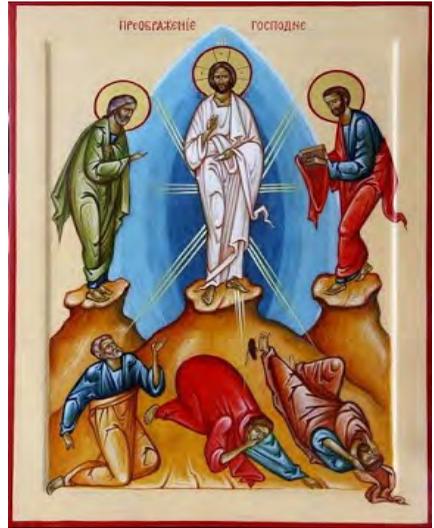
Rafic Vawter
313.624.9867

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

THIS IS MY BELOVED SON

I ended the last issue of this article by sharing that Christianity has, from its very beginning, been understood as a “journey” whose destination is the kingdom of heaven. Jesus Christ’s Transfiguration is an important landmark in this journey. It is a timeless story, a wonderful and truly miraculous episode from the life of Jesus Christ that reveals a lot about our own journey toward salvation. While this story starts with the incident witnessed by Peter, John and James on the top of a mountain in Palestine sometime around the year 33 CE, the significance and the message of the this event extends much further than that.

While much of what makes Christianity what it is took place before and after the New Testament (NT) was written, most Christians would agree that what it contains is a sufficient basis for our salvation. Although the word of God - or the “memoirs of the apostles,” as an ancient writer refers to the Gospels - has a strong historical element, it is misleading to reduce the importance to the Gospels to the status of a historical source. They are more than that. The Gospel narratives in the ancient church were written in order to be read aloud, heard and prayed in the Eucharistic gatherings of the Christians. The Gospels are first of all liturgical texts, and they were compiled primarily for this reason. These texts took their shape in early Christian communities and eventually were chosen by the early church as authoritative writings because they helped the people of God prepare for their participation in the sacramental sharing of the body and the blood of Christ that followed, and the kingdom of heaven to which it led. For this reason, every reading from the Gospels reveals something

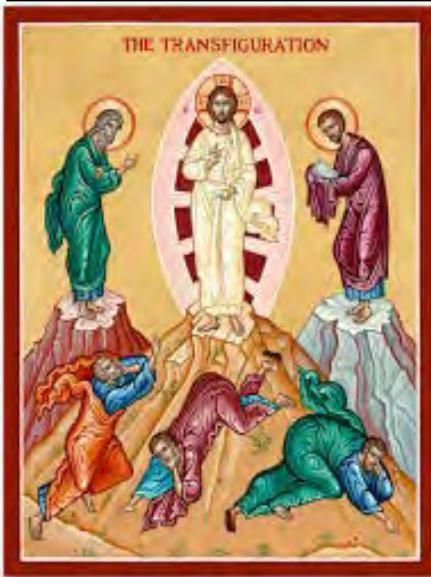


THE TRANSFIGURATION

about the kingdom of heaven and how one is to live in order to gain access to this kingdom.

When we read texts of Aeschylus, Shakespeare or Ionesco, we are fully aware that their natural setting is the theater stage, and we try to imagine how they serve dramatic principles that are fulfilled in the theatre. Outside this framework there is much in the texts that does not make sense. Likewise, when we examine passages from the NT, it is good to keep in mind the reason for which they were written and the Eucharistic context in which they were received.

UNDERSTANDING THEOSIS - DEIFICATION



Maximus the Confessor truly understands divinization as indeed involving the human constitution in its entirety. In the final act of homecoming, both soul and body will be granted resurrection, that is, the psychosomatic whole of the human being will be reinstated in its relationship with God. Maximus does not pose, according to one author, “an absorption into God’s essence,” nor even “contemplation of divine essence (which is truly inaccessible), but communion in divine energy, transparency and transfiguration to divine action in the world”; humanity’s own energy,

when in tune with the divine, propels it toward life in the Logos, that is, realization of God’s primordial design in divinization.

I realize that this may be difficult to understand. It is all about the meaning and purpose of human life and existence in a temporal world. We are here to learn how to become the humans that God intended when He created humankind - we are here to become more like the human prototype, that is Jesus - we are here to achieve personal change and transformation.

Faith is instrumental to divinization, for it enables one’s filial adoption as a child of God, which is a spiritual birth, but “faith without love does not bring about the illumination of knowledge in the soul.” Maximus brings faith and love together in his allegorical interpretation of Peter and John. The character of Peter represents unshakable faith and the life of *praxis*, or practical life; John stands for perfect love and a life of *theoria*, or contemplation. Both men, who are portrayed rushing to the tomb of Christ, symbolize two different yet converging spiritual modes of existence.

Maximus is drawing on his experience of monasticism, whose tradition of *praxis* and *theoria* is a paradigm of divinization of “life in Christ,” which is also relevant for the entire Body of Christ, the Church. *Praxis* and *theoria* are mutually interdependent, and, in their correlation, represent the fruition of spiritual life. This means that for us to spiritually grow we must attempt to integrate both *praxis* and *theoria* into our lives, making sure that our faith is real and is supported by a sound and good prayer life.



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

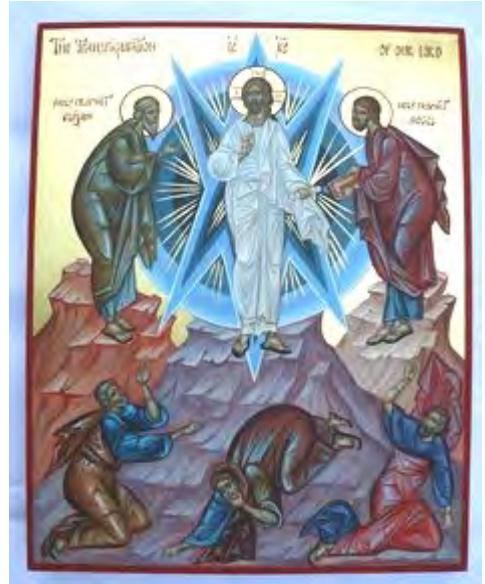
The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 65 No 35 112h WEEKEND AFTER PENTECOST August 31 - September 1, 2019

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN EAST

Even though it would be foolish to neglect the rich history of Christian tradition concerning Christian thinking about salvation, it would be equally shortsighted to be content only with past formulations of soteriology. The critical task of Christian theology is to express the living tradition in a way that not only makes sense the present context but even points to the future. This truly influences our present attempts at a spirituality that can exist in this present time.

There are several *lacvuna* (*gaps*) in the traditional theology of salvation that need to be addressed in light of the new challenges of the third millennium. With regard to the doctrines of deification and justification (i.e., the counter part of Western theology regarding salvation), the following two topics need to be restudied and elaborated for the Christian witness to make sense in the ever-changing world: (1) the relation of soteriology to the world's context and (2) the relation of deification and justification to other religions.

The Lutheran World Federation held a consultation in Wittenberg, Germany in 1998 entitled "Justification in the World' Context!" The consultation set itself the task of examining the significance and relevance of the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith with regard to impending current problems: What constitutes justification in today's



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performance-based societies? What does it signify in North American society? What is its relevance in Latin America, Asia and Africa? What challenges confront Lutherans in an increasingly secularized Europe? How does the message of justification manifest itself in the light of global interaction? Or in relation to social injustice or to the internet?

Christ and the Law

When Christ says to him, "If you would enter life, keep the commandments," the man expects Him to add immediately, "my commandments." "Which ones?" he asks. He was quite deceived in his expectation. For Christ did not answer him as he expected but simply pointed him to the law.

This is not because the law is perfection, for "no one is justified by the law," as it is written, but because the life lived according to law is a kind of introduction to the eternal life, briefly acquainting trainees to the things above. "For the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ."

The law is the starting point for social justice. Christ is the perfection. For the beginning of good is to act justly, He says. Just action then is shown by the law, but goodness is shown by Christ. The law taught us to repay those who wish to harm us, as in "eye for eye, tooth for tooth."

But Christ taught us to let go such balanced vengeance with a view to the greater good, teaching that "if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if anyone would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well."

St. Cyril of Alexandria