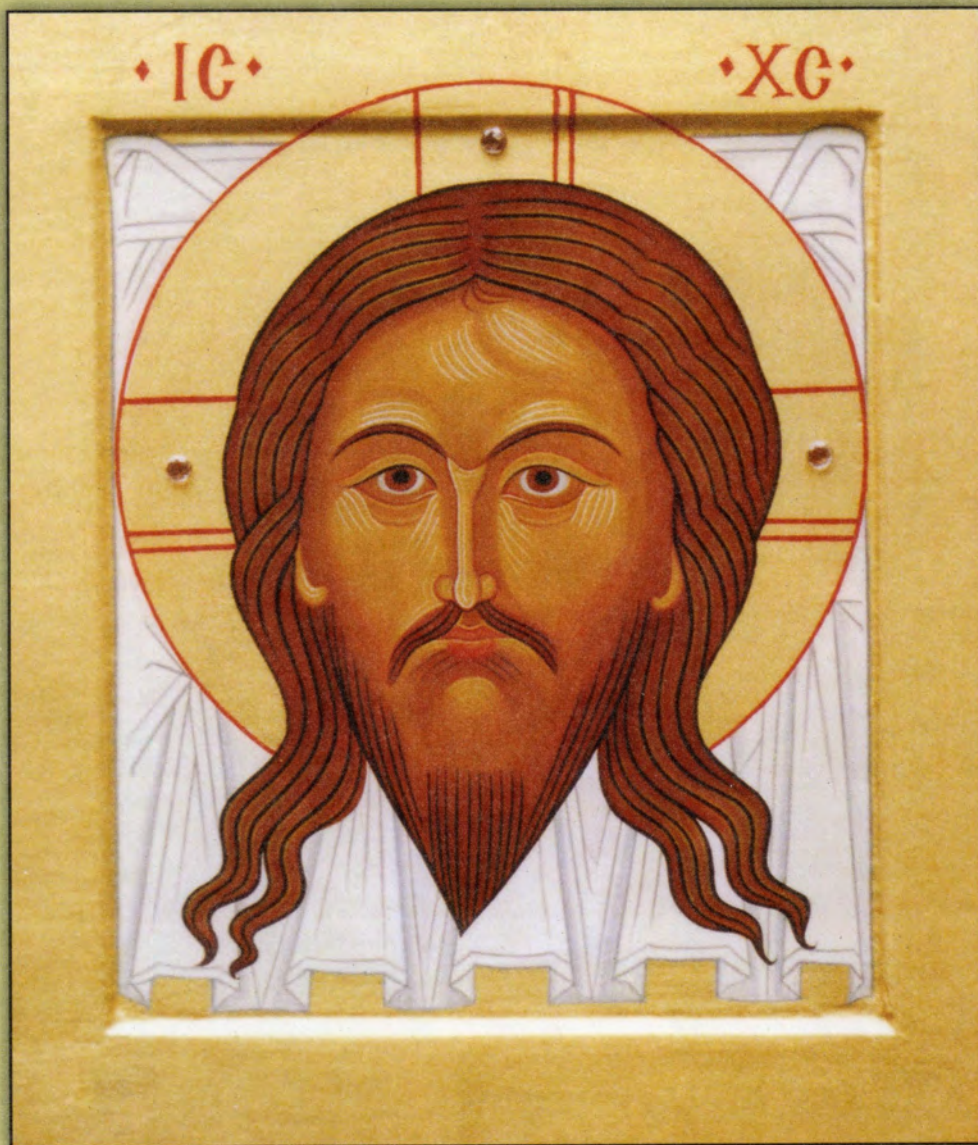


SUNDAY OF CHEESEFARE



Icon of the Holy Napkin

A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this last weekend before the beginning of the Great Fast, our readings are taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans and Matthew's Gospel. Paul's Letter to the Romans is the first of the Letters attributed to him in the New Testament.

Paul exhorts the Romans, and also us, to use the present time to grow in the faith. He writes: *It is now the hour for you to wake from sleep, for our salvation is closer than when we first accepted the faith.... Put on the Lord Jesus Christ....*

This is important for us to hear as we begin this Fast. Now is the time. We have no assurance that we will be given another Great Fast. So we are encouraged to make the most of these next 40 days.

The passage from Matthew's Gospel gives us good advice. Besides reminding us that if we forgive the faults of others God will forgive us our faults, he adds: *When you fast, you are not to look glum as the hypocrites do....When you fast, see to it that you groom your hair and wash your face. In that way no one can see you are fasting but your Father who is hidden.*

So, the Great Fast must be something that only our Heavenly Father observes. Others don't need to know what we are doing during this time. And, by the way, we should not tell others that we are "giving-up" a variety of things. The Great Fast is not about "giving-up" things but, rather,



about disciplining ourselves. God doesn't care if we give up candy or other things. We can't buy-Him-off by our little penances. We engage in various acts of self-denial to discipline ourselves and to help ourselves focus more on our spiritual life. If you give up all kinds of things but don't pay attention to your spiritual growth, it is all meaningless. For example, giving up candy does not compensate for the gossip you may have engaged in and, therefore, placate God and get Him to forgive your sins.

By the way, this weekend focuses upon "FORGIVENESS". We truly ask all others to forgive us if we have failed to unconditionally love them. If we give forgiveness, we become capable of receiving forgiveness!

CHRIST, TRUE GOD and TRUE MAN

Our Christian dogma tells us that Jesus has two natures, a divine nature and a human nature. The two natures of Christ, without being mixed, nonetheless know a certain compenetration. The divine energies radiate from the divinity of Christ and penetrate his humanity. This, however, does not mean that His divinity forces His humanity to act in a certain manner. Christ, St. John of Damascus states, becomes man through love while remaining God, and the fire of his divinity kindles human nature forever. This is why we humans, while remaining human, can partake of the divinity and become unto the likeness of God, as manifested in the Person of Jesus, by grace.

How God accomplished the joining of the Person of the Son with human flesh, is and always will be a mystery. While the Church has found words and concepts to express the result of God's incarnation, it still must remain a mystery of how this was truly accomplished.

What this mystery does do is reveal to us that our humanity, because it was assumed by God in the Person of Jesus, is somehow intimately joined with God. This fact is found in the words of St. Paul who writes: *You must know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is within - the Spirit you have received from God.*

During the Great Fast, we have yet another opportunity to reflect more intensely on the mystery of Jesus Christ and the implications that this mystery has for us. Since Jesus was truly human and truly divine and since we are brought into existence through God's sharing His life with us, than we can become more like Jesus. It, of course, takes our cooperation with God and takes our desire and efforts. We have to want



this mystery to be true - the mystery that God has joined Himself to us through the sharing of His life-force, His Spirit.

So our efforts during this lifetime must be focused on growing to be more like Jesus so that we fulfill what God intended when He brought us into existence.

We know this to be true, Jesus, as a man, was able to live like He did because He was selfless. The work of our transformation must be to become selfless, thinking about others before ourselves. Although it will take an eternity, **NOW IS THE TIME TO START.**

THIS IS MY BELOVED SON

St. Paul adds these three important passages, essential to understanding the meaning of how Christ's Baptism relates to our own journeys with God:

Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we were buried with him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of his death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of his resurrection. (Romans 6:3-5).

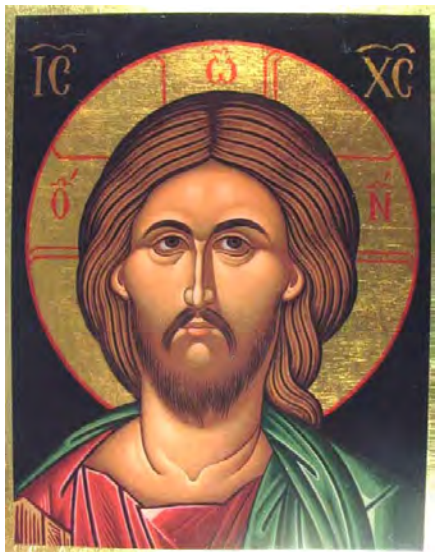
You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26-28)

In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism, in which you also were raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he has made alive together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses (Colossians 2:11-13).

And then consider this, from the Book of Acts:

And he said to them, "into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "into John's baptism." Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 19:3-5).

So what does it all mean for us today? What



do the Baptism and the Transfiguration of Christ mean for us today? We have to keep rediscovering their message of salvation. And yet it is not enough to replace the old language with contemporary expressions. The meaning and the context of the biblical and Christ-centered life reveal themselves to us when we approach them as practitioners and participants from the inside. This is something that both the Baptism and the Transfiguration of Jesus still tell us: neither one is related to a moral teaching, or to something that may be said about God in a descriptive way. In fact, very little of what Jesus says or does is *about* God. Very little of what he says or does ever enhances our knowledge of theological matters directly.

St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



THE GREAT FAST

Begins Tomorrow, February 24th

Today you were anointed to begin the Great Fast - our preparation for the Great and Holy Week and Easter. As I have repeatedly shared, the Church exhorts us to observe this period in a special way. It must be a way that is freely chosen and voluntary if it is to be effective in helping us to change and spiritually grow.

PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY

Fridays @ 7:00 PM

FOOD DRIVE

*Parish Outreach for the Great Fast
Beginning Next Sunday, March 1st*

Our Parish Council has decided that we will hold a "FOOD DRIVE" during the Great Fast and then contribute the food we collect to St. Patrick's Senior Center in Detroit before Easter. We have done this as a Parish Outreach in the past. Please, no outdated dry foods. We will provide further details as we go along.

***Great minds discuss ideas.
Average minds discuss events.
Small minds discuss people***

THE NEW LIFE

The NEW LIFE which begins with our Initiation into the Church, is new because it calls us to live and think in a way that may be entirely different from the way



that people in our modern society think. We are called to think about the "spiritual dimension" of life and not just about the "physical dimension." Unfortunately I believe that people get so absorbed in the physical world that they fail to realize that we humans also have a spiritual dimension - a true dimension which is exceedingly more important than the physical dimension. Our "spiritual natures" are with us for all eternity. Our "physical natures" are limited. Our spiritual natures, however, have to grow and develop just as our physical natures do. So it is critical that we give ourselves to the development of our spiritual natures.

This being said, we must ask ourselves: *What am I doing that will help me develop my spiritual nature? Do I understand how important it is that I spiritually grow during this lifetime?*

(Continued on page 8)

A PRAYER A DAY DURING THE GREAT FAST

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24th

Heavenly Father, as I begin this Great Fast, I ask You to fortify my mind and heart so that this may be a spiritually, efficacious time for me. Help me to put aside the cares of my life and world and focus on finding ways to grow in my likeness of Jesus, Who is Your image. Help me quiet my life, shutting out all the noise of my world and its many distractions. Help me to sincerely pray and find ways to increase my self-discipline so that I might be open to the movement of Your Spirit within me. Help me to grow in my ability to unconditionally love others and grow in my selflessness. I make this prayer to You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25th

Heavenly Father, as I begin this forty-day journey to Easter, help me to develop the habit of taking time at the end of each day to examine how I lived that day. As I do this, help me to come to an understanding of how I must change in order to grow in my likeness of Jesus and then grant me the courage and strength to work on making the changes I must in order to become each and every day more like the child You dreamed about from all eternity. I further beg Your guidance and help to respond to the opportunities that life presents me in such a manner that I will change. I make this prayer to You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26th

Heavenly Father, as I think about the task of changing my heart and mind, I realize that this takes effort and that I must find ways to fortify myself in maintaining these efforts. I realize that I must pace myself in this effort, knowing that change takes time and that the journey is more important than the destination. I ask You, Heavenly Father, to help me be realistic about what I can accomplish and, at the same time, increase my desire to make the personal transformation that I know is important for my salvation. I desire to truly grow in my awareness of what it means to be Your Child. Help me in my efforts. I make this prayer to You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27th

Heavenly Father, as I begin my forty-day journey with the Church to Holy Pascha, I beg You to help me understand the true meaning of this time and to grow in my faith. I freely and voluntarily embrace this time as a time of spiritual growth. Help me to see my strengths and my weaknesses and to use them to help me find at least one thing that I can change in my life. Heavenly Father help me not to judge others. It is difficult as I listen to the News about what is happening in the world. Help me to keep my mind and heart open, learning to love all my neighbors as myself. I make this prayer to You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

A PRAYER A DAY DURING THE GREAT FAST

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28th

Heavenly Father, the first week of the Great Fast is almost completed. Thank You for helping me get off to a good start. I beg the continued support of Your Spirit, Who I believe is within me, so that I might, every day of the Fast, come to a deeper understanding of my life, my relationship with You and with others. I ask for the gift of “insight” that I might more clearly see what and how I have to change my thinking, attitudes and behaviors so that they might become more like those of Jesus, the Christ. I believe that, with the assistance of Your Spirit, I can change and be more like Jesus. I make this prayer to You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 29th

Heavenly Father, I ask for Your continued help as I attempt to live this Great Fast. Help me to believe that if I make this a special time I will be prepared to celebrate the Great and Holy Week and the Resurrection of Christ in a manner that will bring about spiritual growth. I know, however, that I have to personally work to prepare myself, cooperating with Your Spirit to make this a time of spiritual growth. Give me the courage, insight and strength to apply myself to the task of spiritual growth. I believe that if I pursue spiritual growth, I will grow in my likeness of Jesus, the Christ, Who is Your image. I make this prayer to You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

SUNDAY, MARCH 1st

Heavenly Father, on this first weekend of the Great Fast, the Church shares the Gospel story of the calling of Philip and Nathanael. In this story Christ calls Nathanael a “person without guile”, which means a person of innocence, honest intent, and pure motives, whose life reflects the simple practice of conforming his daily actions to principles of integrity. Help me to become such a person. I know that this is the kind of person I need to be if I am to be like Jesus. I know that I cannot accomplish this, however, without Your Spirit’s guidance and assistance. Therefore I ask Your help and I pledge my willingness to work to achieve this. I make this prayer to You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?

Why not call someone who you know is alone or perhaps shut-in and just let them know that you have not forgotten them. I suspect that



each and every one of us must know at least one person who is alone or shut-in. This is very much a corporal act of mercy.

OR... you could visit a person you haven’t seen in a long time

OR... you could send a card to a person who might be alone, shut-in or sick. These very simple things can make a whole lot of difference to others.

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

Rev Deacon Leonard Mier
313.584-6795

Greg & Esther Petrovich
734.453-4354

Rafic Vawter
313.624.9867

Sunday, February 23 - Weekend of Cheesefare - Tone 4
10:00 AM + Special Intention

FIRST WEEK OF THE GREAT FAST - TONE 5

Monday, February 24 - Tarasius, Archbishop of Constantinople
No Service Scheduled

Tuesday, February 25 - Second Finding of John the Baptizer's Head
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday, February 26 - Porphyry of Gaza, Bishop
No Service Scheduled

Thursday, February 27 - Procopius, Venerable Confessor
No Service Scheduled

Friday, February 28 - Basil, Venerable Confessor
7:00 PM - Presanctified Liturgy

Saturday, February 29 - Commemoration of Theodore's Miracle
No Service Scheduled

Sunday, March 1 - First Weekend of the Great Fast - Tone 5
10:00 AM + Special Intention

(Continued from page 5 - The New Life)

If I don't pay attention to my spiritual growth, I've missed an opportunity to fulfill the purpose of this earthly life.

Again, all of this takes truly some reflection and prayer. To spiritually grow includes psychological, moral, emotional and social growth. I have to see myself as God's creation who has been set on a path of development and growth. That is what this earthly life is all about. Look around you. All living things are in the process of "growing" and "becoming" the best possible version of themselves. The same is true with us humans. We are here to GROW. When we are called to exist this earthly life, we should be different. If when we are called to leave earthly life we are the same as when we came into earthly life, we have failed to fulfill the purpose of this earthly life. Even Jesus left earthly existence different than when He came into it.



THE COURAGE TO PRAY

I can honestly say that this has not been a very easy article to write, based on the author I have been using. In the last several issues, the author has been sharing the idea that we must present out true selves to God when we enter into prayer. Of course this raises the primary question: *Who is my primary self?* We so very often we present to others, and to God, the person we would like to be. It is hard for most persons, I believe, to truly be who they are. We always want to be more than we are. This, of course, keeps us from entering into a true relationship with God because we present a false person to Him.

The author, however, goes on to suggest that the encounter we have with God does not depend on the truth of only one of the parties to it. The Other is equally important. The God we encounter must be as true as we who seek him. The problem is that most people want to make God in THEIR image and likeness instead of discovering Him as He is.

As I talk to many people, they believe that God has the same values as they do. He is desirous of punishing the evil and rewarding the good. This, I would suggest, is a human value. Many believe that God cannot love the “evil” person” without remembering that the “evil person” is, although they do not know it, the temple of God’s Spirit.

I truly believe that God, because He has to unconditionally love all of His creatures because He is God, cannot even hate the evil person. That, I know, jars the sensitivities of most people. They want God to hate the people they hate and punish the people they feel should be punished. Thank God, I say, that God is not in our image and likeness. If He was



He would be very “limited” and, of course, not God.

The God we encounter must be as true as we who seek him. But is not God always true? Is he not always himself, unchanging? Of course. But it is not only God as He is in himself who is involved in our prayers. It is also the “image” we have of him, for our attitude depends not only on what he is in himself but also on what we believe him to be.

SO, what is your image of God? Does He act as us humans or does he act in a very different way? I always become freighted when I think that God would act as I would act. Then He isn’t God.

ST BASIL'S THOUGHTS ON GENESIS



ST BASIL THE GREAT

I ended this article in the last Bulletin speaking about the creation of woman. It was at the point when *adam* realized that *eve* could be his partner. The woman was his match, his other self, corresponding to him in every way, utterly different from the animals that had been brought to him - which is what the term **bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh** here means. Such identity of essence involves a commitment to loyalty as well: when all the tribes of Israel told David they were his bone and his flesh, they did not mean they were related to him by blood. Rather they pledged loyalty to

him as if they were in fact related. In the same way, the man's exclamation that the woman is his bone and flesh can be seen as his pledge of love and loyalty to her.

The man was tasked with naming the animals, bestowing function and expressing his authority over them. Coming hard on the heels of that, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that by calling the woman something (*ishah*) the man was fulfilling this divine mandate and giving her a name as he before named the animals. Yet even so, this naming is not exactly on par with the dispassionate naming of the animals. It is also a cry of joyful discovery, a primordial *eureka!* as the man suddenly recognized in the woman a feminine mirror image of his own self. The actual and formal naming would come later, in Genesis 3:20. For now man exclaims that she **shall be called *ishah*, because she is taken out of *ish*.**

The word *ishah* is the normal Hebrew word for *woman/wife*, just as the word *ish* is the normal Hebrew word for *man*. The wordplay is all the more wonderful, since the "-ah" ending of the word *ishah* is the usual feminine noun suffix. No matter that Hebraists deny any real etymological connection between *ish* and *ishah* - the wordplay serves to make the spiritual connection: a woman is the same as a man, only feminine. God brought the man his true counterpart, and the man instantly recognized her as such.

I wonder how my readers are fairing in this article. Hopefully you are getting a very different idea about GENESIS.



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНИЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 67 No 8 WEEKEND OF CHEESEFARE February 22-23, 2020

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN EAST

I believe that our Eastern spirituality is all about coming up with a realistic understanding of the meaning and purpose of our earthly lives. As I experience our world and society, it seems that very few people really know why they are here and what this earthly life is all about. Humans so quickly become involved in “amassing” wealth and “enjoying” themselves that they fail to really think that there is a reason why they are here and that God has a plan for them while they are here.

God's plan is for us to grow in our awareness of who we are in creation and realize that we are given certain earthly opportunities to do one thing: grow in our relationship with God. We grow in our relationship when we realize that this earthly life is all about actualizing our potential to grow in our LIKENESS of Jesus and therefore in our LIKENESS of God.

So many people that I meet seem not to understand that there is a

meaning and purpose for their earthly existence. They just seem to think that they are alive and, after a time, die

. That is not how I read God's plan and I don't think that is how the Church sees God's plan. First, the Church believes that human life is immortal because it shares in God's own life. This means that we have an eternity to do one thing: become more like



Jesus. How this will happen I am not sure but I believe that this will truly happen. God, through the Church, which continues to promote the teachings of Jesus, encourages us to

make every moment count during this present earthly life. We are called to use all the challenges and opportunities that life presents to actualize the potential we have to be true children of God - to be people who grow each day in our LIKENESS of Jesus, Who is the IMAGE of God.

It is my prayer that this Great Fast will be spiritually productive for all of us!

Forgiveness Sunday

A wise old monk once said, "There are two parts of the Gospel. The first part is the believing part, and the second part is the behaving part." The Gospel readings over the past few Sundays were intended to prepare us for our journey through the Great Fast and to challenge us, if necessary, to adjust our behavior accordingly.

First, the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee reminds us of the need for true humility in confessing our sins before God and honestly admitting them to ourselves. Next, the Sunday of the Prodigal Son reminds us of God's abundant mercy and constant willingness to forgive. On the Sunday of Meatfare, we hear the Gospel reading about the final judgment and are reminded that there will come a time in each of our lives when we will be held accountable for every thought, word and deed.

Today, on the Sunday of Cheesefare, we are reminded that we must pass on forgiveness to others as we wish God to forgive us. The Gospel reading tells us clearly, "if you forgive the faults of others, your Heavenly Father will forgive yours; but, if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive you." (Matthew 6:14)

Let us, therefore, make every deliberate effort to be humble, merciful and forgiving during the forty days of the Great Fast because "now is the season for repentance. Let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light." (Stichera from Vespers of Forgiveness)

Icon of the Holy Napkin by Solrunn Ness