

SUNDAY OF THE MAN BORN BLIND



Icon of the Ascension of Our Lord -- May 21st

A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

As we begin the fifth week of our Easter celebration, our Epistle reading is taken from ACTS again and the Gospel of John. The story in ACTS deals with the imprisonment of Paul. Its an interesting story in-so-far-as the young girl with a clairvoyant spirit correctly identifies Paul and his companions. She says: *These men are servants of the Most High God; they will make know to you the way of salvation.* Think about this. She correctly identifies them. This, of course, makes Paul angry and he casts out the spirit that gave her that power. He is then arrested.

The lengthy story ends with Paul being set free by an earthquake and then, because he didn't try to escape, converting the jailor and his family. The story truly speaks to God working through Paul.

The lengthy Gospel story recounts how Jesus cured a man who was born blind. There is one line in the story which is important. Jesus tells His disciples that the blind man was there in order to: *let God's works show forth in him.* Jesus also shares with His disciples this: *I am the light of the world.*

I wonder what message you, my readers, derive from these two stories? In many ways they do not seem to convey a common message.

As I thought about it, I realized that these stories were conveying one truth, namely that all the events that transpire in our lives are meant to show forth God. For this to take place, however, we have to see that Christ is the LIGHT of the world and that if we attempt to look at life events through His eyes, we see that they are all opportunities to spiritually grow and personally change. Life presents



the exact, unique challenges that each of us needs to bring about greater personal transformation and spiritual growth. We need to see them in this manner.

The problem is that people don't like change and are especially reticent to change their personal habit, ways of living and thinking. We humans so easily "close our minds" to any new ways of understanding life and so we are stuck. If we keep our minds open to growing in our understanding of life, we discover internal peace and a real feeling of freedom. When we allow our minds to be locked into only one way of thinking, we miss the opportunity to truly come to experience God.

St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



I've developed a new philosophy. I only dread one day at a time!

FEAST OF THE ASCENSION

Thursday, May 21st

This coming Thursday we celebrate the Feast of the Ascension. Deacon Len and I will be serving the Divine Liturgy, which will be live-streamed, at 7 PM. We will also include the feast in our Sunday Liturgy, Sunday May 24th at 10 AM. While this technically ends our Paschal celebration, there is a week intervening our celebration of the feast of Pentecost.

On Pentecost we will, at the end of the Liturgy, serve a Panahaya (Prayer for the deceased) since we will not be able to go to cemeteries. If you would like to have your family members mentioned during this service, please send me their names either by email or snail mail (postal service) and I will mention them. My email can be found in this bulletin (wruchgy@gmail.com). We pray for our beloved deceased.

LIVING THE NEW LIFE

The life that we can achieve by attempting to imitate Jesus, is a new life since it gives us a new perspective on the meaning and purpose of this earthly life. Gaining a new perspective on earthly life, I can assure you, brings about greater interior contentment and peace. It help us to see the challenges and disappointments in life in an entirely different way. It robs these of any moral value, that is good or bad, and casts them into the category of true opportunities to spiritually grow. When and if we put a moral value on the challenges of life, we demonstrate to ourselves that we have a closed mind about "what life should be like" and deny ourselves the opportunity to truly find God.



Life was never meant to be exactly the way that we conceive it. If it was, we would never grow or change. We have discover what life is meant to teach us and how it is meant to help us to grow.

This requires that we attempt to maintain an open mind about the events of life. (Continued on page 6)

BECOMING A HEALING PRESENCE



I have been sharing, in this article, the fact that I believe each of us have been called to be a “healing presence” to others. The only way, however, that I can have something to give to others - to heal others - is if I have allowed Christ to care for me first and to heal me. Of course in order to do this I have to realize that I too need healing in some way.

I begin to care for myself by centering my being, my soul-mind-body. I allow Christ to center me by gradually becoming still inwardly, which is no small task in today’s environment.

Our elders tell us that the person seeking inner stillness is someone who has embarked upon the journey into his own heart - not someone who shuts himself

off physically from others, but someone who “returns into himself,” closing the door of his mind. Solitude is a state of soul, not a matter of geographical location and the real desert lies within the heart.

I don’t know if any of my readers have ever thought about this or attempted to return into themselves. This is probably a foreign concept to many. It truly means that I take time out of my life to attempt to “know who I am” and to gain insight into not only my thoughts and ideas about God, life and others but someone who challenges himself to genuinely look at the way that I am living.

St Basil said, we return to ourselves and, having returned inwardly, we ascent to God. All of the Fathers of the Church seemed to believe that we must turn inward in order to find God and ourselves. By presenting this idea I do not want to frighten my readers but, rather, to encourage them to make an effort to think about these things since our tradition does say that this is the path to spiritual growth.

What kind of journey does the Christian take? To be a Christian is to be a sojourner, for spiritually we are always on the move. We are on a journey through the inward space of the heart, a journey not measured by the hours of our watch or the days on the calendar, for it is a journey out of time into eternity. The seeker begins to wait upon God in stillness and silence, no longer talking about God or to God but simply listening. We could say the person who is seeking stillness is seeking to become a healing presence for others. To achieve this, however, takes time and effort. I truly believe that It is a worthwhile investment in our time since we come to know the meaning of life.

CHRIST'S DESCENT INTO HADES

In order to truly understand Christ's Descent into Hades, we must look to the Church's liturgical traditions and the Scriptures. We must also look to the dogmatic statements of the ecumenical and local councils, which have also undergone the same process of acceptance, also enjoy the same authority, though it must be remembered that council decisions ought not to be examined outside the context in which they were written. Each council responded to the challenges of its times, therefore not everything that was decided by the councils is of equal significance for the contemporary Christian. Moreover, the church has the authority to return to the decisions of its councils and, if necessary, modify them.



Next in significance after Scripture liturgy and councils are the writings of the church fathers on doctrinal questions. In examining patristic works one should differentiate between those written on behalf of the church, which express general church teaching, and those reflecting personal theological opinion. Personal opinion is not sanctified by a general church acceptance and therefore cannot be placed on the same level with opinions that have wide-ranging acceptance.

They should also not be eliminated in the attempt to construct a simplified “comprehensive theology” or to find a certain “common denominator” of True dogma. the authority of personal opinion is based on the fact that the authors are recognized by the church as fathers or teachers. If personal opinions are expressed by a father of the church and not condemned by a church council, they are considered to be within the boundaries of what is allowed and possible. They cannot, however, be regarded as obligatory for true believers. We must always remember that our faith deals with ideas that are beyond the complete comprehension of the human mind. We are dealing with things that are considered to be

MYSTERIES. mysteries about God and beyond human comprehension. All we can know about God, truly, is what He is not (e.g., He is not hateful, vindictive, mean, cruel).

When we look at the dogmas of our faith, I find one thing is true: they give us hope in the meaning of life and tell us that we are loved by a Heavenly Spirit that is the source of all life and creation. They also tell us that He is here with us, going through life with us if only we attempt to recognize His presence in our life.

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
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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
248.734.7078

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, May 17 - Weekend of the Man Born Blind
10:00 AM - Special Intention - Liturgy Streamed

6th PASCHAL WEEK

Monday, May 18 - Theodotus & Others, Martyrs
No Service Scheduled

Tuesday, May 19 - Patrick, Bishop-Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday, May 20 - Thalaleus & Others, Martyrs
No Service Scheduled

Thursday, May 21 - ASCENSION OF OUR LORD
7:00 PM - Special Intention - Liturgy Streamed

Friday, May 22 - Constantine & Helen, Equals to the Apostles
No Service Scheduled

Saturday, May 23 - Michael of Synnada, Bishop-Confessor
No Service Scheduled

Sunday, May 24 - Weekend of the Fathers of the First Council
10:00 AM - Special Intention - Liturgy Streamed

(Continued from page 5 - Living The New Life)

Think about this. If Jesus demanded that life should be the way that He wanted it to be, we would never have been able to come to understand the meaning of salvation. He did not require life to "be as He thought it should be" but rather He accepted life as it was given to Him.

Too frequently we think that Jesus knew everything about how His earthly life would be like because He was also God. Our dogma tells us that His Divine Nature did not dictate and inform His Human Nature. Therefore, He experienced life as we do with the exception that He was able to avoid sin because of His strong belief in His Father - His Abba.

I know that this thought challenges most people. We would rather Jesus to be more God than man so that we can say: I could never live like Jesus because I'm only man and not God.



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



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНИЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 67 No 20 Weekend of the Man Born Blind May 16-17, 2020

THE IMPACT OF THE RESURRECTION

In the last issue of this article I tried to challenge my readers to think about what the Resurrection of Christ really means to them. It is my contention that we, especially as Christians, must attempt to formulate an answer to this question so that we can spiritually grow. As Paul shared: *And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.*

The foundation of our faith is built upon the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This was the proof that all that He taught was God's revelation to us about how we must live as human beings if we are to understand the true meaning and purpose of life. Christ's Resurrection seals, in my mind, the truth of His teachings. Further, it also helps me to

see that the way I live this earthly life does mean something and that if I attempt to live as Jesus lived, I will spiritually grow and become a little more like the person that God has dreamed for all eternity. I realize that

I can't achieve total personal change and transformation in just one lifetime, but that it is essential that I make use of every opportunity in this lifetime to grow.

So again I would challenge you, my readers, to grapple with the question: *What does the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead mean to me?* I would then encourage you to wrestle with your

thoughts and feelings and come up with an answer that makes sense to you. I don't think we should just rattle off some pat answer that is given to us by the Church or Tradition. I also don't think we should be afraid to come up with our own answer. We are more likely to believe our own answer more than that of someone else.



Our True Home

Once there was a young man who became a Christian many years ago. His rich pagan father despised him for this. He argued with his son, beat him, and then finally threw him out of the house. The young man remained a devout Christian and won many others to Christ as well. Eventually, the young man was brought before the magistrate, and was accused of being a Christian.

The magistrate offered him a choice. First, he would release him if he would simply renounce Christ, come home and enjoy his father's wealth. Or, he could remain a Christian and be put to death. "Leaving my father's riches does not trouble me," said the young man, "for there is a far more beautiful home waiting for me with my Heavenly Father."

This Thursday, we will celebrate the feast of Our Lord's return to His Heavenly Father. On Ascension Thursday, forty days after His Resurrection, Our Lord took His disciples to the Mount of Olives near Bethany, blessed them and was lifted in a cloud which took Him from their sight. (Acts 1 :9)

The Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord reminds us of our final destination. Ultimately, we are all created to dwell with God in Heaven. While we journey on earth, however, God continues to share Himself with us by sending His Holy Spirit to us, to live within us and to work among us. Therefore, let us, on the Feast of the Ascension, anticipate the coming of the Holy Spirit into the world and into us in a renewed way.