

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of Saint Panteleimon -- July 27th

A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this 8th weekend after Pentecost, our readings are taken from St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians and St. Matthew's Gospel. St Paul established a Christian community in Corinth about the year 50, on his second missionary journey. According to his own testimony in the epistle, written around 56, he began his work in Corinth in "fear and trepidation" because of the city's extreme moral depravity and its pagan cult. Moderate success attended his efforts at first among the Jewish people who lived there, but they soon turned against him. This is why he wrote to them about the factions that were rampant among them. He begged them to make peace with one another "lest the cross of Christ be rendered void of its meaning".

The Gospel story we hear today is about Jesus "feeding" the 5,000 people who had come out to hear Him preach. The people had originally heard Him preach in a small town. When He retired to a deserted place after hearing the news of His cousin John's death, the people followed Him. It was obvious that they did not bring any food along with them.

Scholars believe that the story is

more about the symbolism of Jesus "feeding" people with His teachings and also the anticipation of the Holy Eucharist.

Think about it. Our spirits are truly nourished by Holy Communion. Holy Communion, however, reminds us that when we offer our lives back to God in "thanksgiving" for the gift of life, we received back from God an enriched life.

When we follow the teachings of



Jesus, which calls us to unconditional love of neighbor, our lives are enriched. So in pairing St Paul's writing to the Corinthians about the disputes that existed among the Corinthians, reminds us that if

we receive Holy Communion in the right spirit, it should lead us to unconditional love of others.

Too frequently, however, people come up with a million reasons why they cannot unconditionally love certain other people. No excuses are legitimate in God's Kingdom. God has enriched our lives by making it possible that we can receive the transformed spiritual food - Jesus' Body and Blood - which has the power to help us spiritually grow if we only receive it with an open mind.

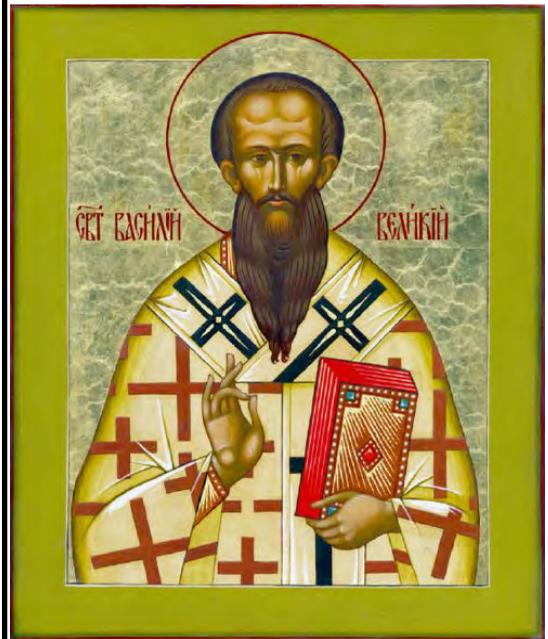
THOUGHTS ON GENESIS

In the most recent weeks I have been sharing thoughts about the encounter of Eve with the serpent. I have highlighted the “half-truths” that the serpent shared with her.

The scene then shifts to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil itself. The serpent is not mentioned as being with her and her husband when she took the fruit, and there is no suggestion in the text that the conversation with the serpent occurred near the tree or even in the garden. Indeed, her reference to the tree as the tree that is in the midst of the garden indicates that the conversation took place some distance from the garden and the tree, for if she were at the tree would she not have simply referred to the tree as “this tree?”

Her husband is still with her, as passive as before. It is possible that he was not with her when the conversation with the serpent occurred but joined her later at the tree. But if that were so, his immediate and passive acquiescence in taking the fruit would not be narrated without comment. It is clear the narrator means us to understand his silent presence throughout.

The case the serpent had made had worked upon her after the conversation concluded. It now seemed so logical: the tree was good for food, it was pleasant to the eyes and was desired to acquire prudence. It was thus very nourishing, beautiful and necessary for spiritual growth. The only sensible course was to reach out and take it. She therefore did



so. She took of its fruit and ate it. After she had eaten it, she also gave some to her husband with her, and he ate it. The man retained his passive role. She took the lead and provided for him. No temptation was needed for persuasion to force him to accept the forbidden fruit. She simply gave, and he obediently received and ate. The popular picture of naked Eve coyly tempting Adam by holding an apple owes nothing to the biblical account.

I wonder what those, who have consistently read this commentary on Genesis, are thinking about this story now. It is a story that is supposed to have meaning. I believe that the meaning we have put into it, however, is misguided.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON EASTERN CATHOLIC CHURCHES

Question: How did the Eastern Churches come about?

Following the Great Schism (1054), the Churches which are now called Orthodox, slowly broke communion with the church of Rome. Rome for the most part ignored them. Eventually, however, political situations, the Crusades, and Jesuit evangelization would change that.

Tradition holds that the Maronites never broke communion with Rome but were “lost” to Rome because of their reclusiveness in Lebanon. They were “rediscovered” by missionaries. The Italo-Albanian Church remained tied to Rome, although again relegated to the backwaters.

The political situation, both civil and ecclesiastical, in the area of Lithuania and Poland led to the so-called Union of Brest (1595), in which the Ukrainian Church came into communion with Rome at their own request. The Jesuits, who helped bring this about, were disappointed, as they had wanted the Ukrainians to convert directly to the Latin Church.

In India, during the 16th century, the Portuguese Jesuits brought about a semi-forced conversion of the St. Thomas Christians (Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara) into the Latin Church. This did not last long, however, as

some people rejected the idea of being forced to lose their heritage. Eventually the Eastern Churches divided into Catholic and Orthodox, Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara communities.

Catholics also proselytized Egypt, leading a small number of Copts (Orthodox Coptic Church) into communion with Rome. At the same time, in 1626, some Ethiopians came into communion with Rome.

The Melkites went through a slightly different process. There the issue was the election of a pro-Roman patriarch, which eventually led to a split (around 1724) within the church, and the Catholic

Melkites came into communion with Rome, while the Antiochians remained separated.

This practice of evangelizing and incorporating small Orthodox groups became known as “uniatism”

It should be noted that the American Byzantine Church originally formed in the United States when disagreements among the Slavs, known at one time as Rusyns, disagreed relative to a name change that resulted from momentary freedom in Ukraine and Ruthenia. A complicated history to say the least.

If you have a question, just let me know!



St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



AND SO THINGS CONTINUE

This has truly been a challenging time in my life as I suspect it has been in the lives of my readers. One of the very important things, I believe, that is a part of this pandemic is learning what we have to learn from it. It obviously is a part of our lives and, therefore, has a lesson to be learned.

I think about how people faced the “Black Death” (1346-1353) and the “Influenza Outbreak” (1918). It seems that periodically humankind has had to face serious threats to life. What is the meaning?

I think that it is critical how we face such a pandemic. It calls us to truly think about our neighbors and how we respect them. Wearing a mask in public does not protect me but, rather, protects others from me and shows that I respect them. I know that this may not be a popular thought but I do think it is the appropriate thought!



LIVING THE NEW LIFE

This earthly life that we have been given by God is meant to be a true and real opportunity for us, who have been created in His “Image”, to grow in His “Likeness” as witnessed



in the Person of Jesus Christ. So we all have a task to accomplish during this lifetime. That task is to spiritually grow and become more and more like the person God “dreamed of” from all eternity. His dream involves all that we can possibly become if we only give ourselves to the task of spiritually growing and changing.

Why were we created with a free will? So that we might freely and voluntarily return God’s love. To return God’s love requires making a choice. We, because we have a free will and are unique, individual persons, tend to think only about ourselves. We have to actually make a choice to return God’s love.

But how do we learn to do this? We learn to do this by loving other humans that we can see and interact with. We have to learn “how to love” (true love is not sexual attraction or lust). As St. John wisely wrote (Continued on page 8)

WORSHIP AND OUR DIVINE LITURGY

As I was rereading this article on the Divine Liturgy, I realized that it is probably more dense than I intended when I began it. What I had hoped to share was that the Divine Liturgy is not just an unique adaptation of a singular “original” worship service. So, I’m going to try and switch gears and see if I can’t make this more intelligible.

From the earliest times, the Eucharist has been a public and not a private affair, the assembly of the people of God and not the private devotion of a series of individuals. For Ignatius of Antioch, the Eucharist is a sign of the unity of the people of God - there is one Eucharist as there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, one Church, one altar.

In one of the early documents of the church, the *Didache*, the passage referring to the Eucharist says that Christians pray that the bread now broken and ‘scattered upon the mountains’ (referring to the scattering of Israel) may be reassembled and reunited into one. For many of the Fathers of the Church, the eucharistic assembly is thus an image of the Church, the people of God assembled with their Head (Jesus) both receiving and awaiting their final redemption.

The Divine Liturgy is the ultimate form of “thanksgiving” that humans can offer to God. It is a ritualized pray form that has the assembled people of God join with Jesus in offering thanks to the Father for the gift of life. The



way that this thanks is offered to God is by offering oneself back to Him. Bread and Wine are food and true symbols of human life. This is why Jesus chose to use them when He told His apostles that this “special food” was indeed Himself and that by their partaking of it they could be assured that He would always be with them.

So when we, together with Jesus, offer up this ‘special food’ to God, we are offering our very lives to God in thanksgiving for the gift of life. This ‘special food’ then becomes Holy Communion, the means by which we are more intimately joined with God. He returns life to us enriched.

It is extremely important that we partake of the consecrated gifts in order to complete our worship. Holy Communion is God’s response to our willingness to be thankful for life and offering our lives to Him. What does it mean to you that you offer your life to God? I guess it truly means that you state you will make every effort at personal change and transformation.

BEING HUMAN - BEING IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

The Scriptures suggest that we are not to consider human beings as individuals, but as bound together within the unity of humanity, a unity that is embodied in the communities to which we belong. The doctrine of the image of God embraces this aspect of what it is to be human, too, for it being in the image means that we have an affinity with God, that entails, too, that we have an affinity with one another, on the basis of which we find some kind of togetherness. And if the Church is the community embracing those who, in Christ, have set out on the path of the personal transformation and change of humans, then the community of the Church should give us some sense of what a true human community should be. Nevertheless, the Church is a part of this creation, so we should not expect to find in any unambiguous way the ideal human community in the Church. We are the Church. As we spiritually grow, change and become more like Christ - personally transformed - we help the Church to change and truly become the Body of Christ extended in time and space through us.



When we have this concept of what it means to be human and created in the image of God with the potential to grow in His likeness, we begin to more clearly understand the preaching and teaching of Jesus.

Jesus taught that personal, spiritual growth is not accomplished by “keeping certain laws, commandments or rules”, but, rather by recognizing that we are a part of humanity and unconditionally loving our neighbor as our self is critical if we are to spiritually grow.

The teachings of Jesus are not filled with “do nots” but, rather, with “dos”. Do this and that and you will grow. The dos are intimately connected with our relationships with other human beings. As we learn how to unconditionally love, and therefore also forgive, all others regardless of how they treat us, we are transformed.

Just keeping “laws” really has no transformative force. We only keep laws because we are afraid of the consequences - punishments. This will not help us spiritually grow. What helps us to spiritually grow is when we actively attempt to live the “Jesus Way of Living” which requires love of 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
248.734.7078

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, July 26 - 8th Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 7
10:00 AM + Noah Patrick Semak; Jane Semak - Liturgy Streamed

9th WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - Tone 8

Monday, July 27 - Panteleimon, Great Martyr
8:00 AM - Special Intention - Liturgy Streamed

Tuesday, July 28 - Prochorus & Others, Apostles
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday, July 29 - Callinicus, Martyr
No Service Scheduled

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

Friday, July 31 - Eudocimus, Venerable
No Service Scheduled

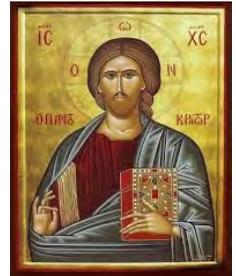
Saturday, August 1 - Procession of the Cross
No Service Scheduled

Sunday, August 2 - 9th Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 8
10:00 AM - Special Intention - Liturgy Streamed

(Continued from page 5 - Living The New Life)

“If anyone says, “My love is fixed on God,” yet hates his brother, he is a liar. One who has no love for the brother he has seen cannot love the God he has not seen.”

So the clue to living the “new life” is to work on “unconditionally loving” each and every other person who crosses our path, regardless of how they treat us. This also includes, however, our thoughts about others. Anytime we even critically judge others within our hearts and minds, makes unconditional love of them totally impossible. It’s all about learning how to be a genuine person, living the way that we believe. I find that in our modern society it is so easy to “dislike” and “judge” others because it seems that social media supports this approach to life. Realizing this, I know where I have to begin my work of personal transformation. Where do you begin?



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

BECOMING A HEALING PRESENCE



In this article I have been sharing thoughts about the spiritual process of descending into one's heart. When we descend into our heart, we discover who we are and where we are going. In the heart we encounter the voice of God. One way to begin this process is to become aware of our "breathing". Awareness of our breathing opens a door to awareness of the presence of God, the giver of breath, and it is the very voice of God, guiding and encouraging us. No one has power to command the heart. It lives its own special life; and no one can do anything about this. Only the Master of All has power to enter the heart, to put feelings into it quite independent of its naturally changing currents.

St Theophan compared the heart to a lever. The lever that controls all our activities is the heart. Here are formed the convictions and sympathies that determine the will and give it strength.

Within the heart is the antenna for the voice of God. We keep our heart open and pure as much as we can, to keep the antenna receptive. St Isaac the Syrian said that "it is better to acquire purity of heart than to convert whole nations of heathens from error.

To become a healing presence is made possible when I realize that my vocation is not my career or my role in life but, rather, is my call from Christ to do what He has me on the planet to do, to cooperate in building up His Kingdom on earth. Hence my vocation is fluid and changes with each passing day, each passing moment, in an enthralling adventure. My vocation is my way of life - His way of life in me - as time passes.

Every person has the same vocation. Every person is created in the image of God and has the potential to grow in His likeness as seen in Jesus Christ.

Every person also has a different vocation. God has an inimitable, exclusive vocation for every person. Within each singular vocation, each person is called in the different way to love God fully and his neighbor as himself.

When we live life as vocation, we witness to the world of the kingdom of God and rejoice in that gift that gives ultimate meaning to our daily, complex lives.

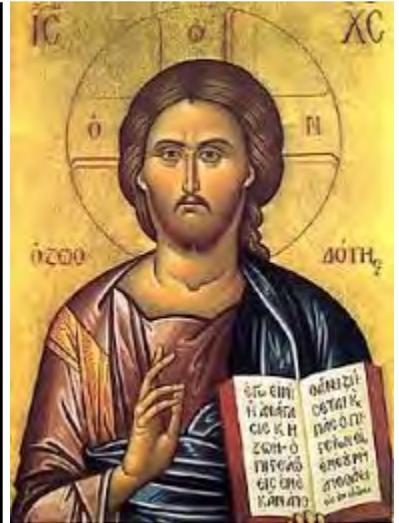
Further, every person is called to be a healing presence - that is, to love others. We are all called to be a healing presence, allowing God to disperse His balm of restoration.

SOMETHING MORE ABOUT SACRED SCRIPTURE

The teachings and the practices of our Church are to be found in the Scriptures and Sacred Apostolic Tradition, which have been handed down to the Church of Christ in the Revelation of God. These sacred Sources are essential not only for correct teaching and worship, but especially as Sources of the promises and covenants of God fulfilled in the Person of Christ. The Father, out of love and compassion, sent Christ to save mankind and to remain forever in the *Ecclesia (Church)* which He founded. It is imperative for all Christians to understand the content of these sacred Sources in order to strengthen their faith in God and to accept Jesus Christ as the only Redeemer by Whom and in Whom man's personal salvation is wrought.

It is of the utmost importance for the Eastern Christian, who dedicates his life to Almighty God, to be able to know God's truths. The Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, along with Sacred Apostolic Tradition are the divine Sources in which Almighty God revealed His Will and which the Church accepted as being the only depository for these truths. The content of the Scriptures was written by chosen and inspired persons, prophets and disciples, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Supreme Author and Guardian under Whose direction and protection the Scriptures become the inspired and infallible Source of faith and salvation. The Fathers of the Church expounded the content of the Scriptures in sermons and homilies in order to spread their meaning and blessings so that the members of the Mystical Body of Christ would not be uninformed of the Good News for their spiritual welfare.

In the Eastern Church, the harmonious interpretation of the Revealed Word is necessary to present the faithful with a united, sound conviction. This does not mean that individuals and clergy



lack freedom to express their own spiritual insights, but the validity of these insights depends upon acceptance by other Fathers of the Church, without which it is wisest to keep silent and avoid being in opposition. Thus, the theologian of the Church has the freedom to present the same truths of the Scriptures in a new expression in order to contend with contemporary ideals and challenges of society. Unlike some Western Christian Communities, there needs to be a common interpretation for the sake of the common good.



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНИЙ ВІСНИК

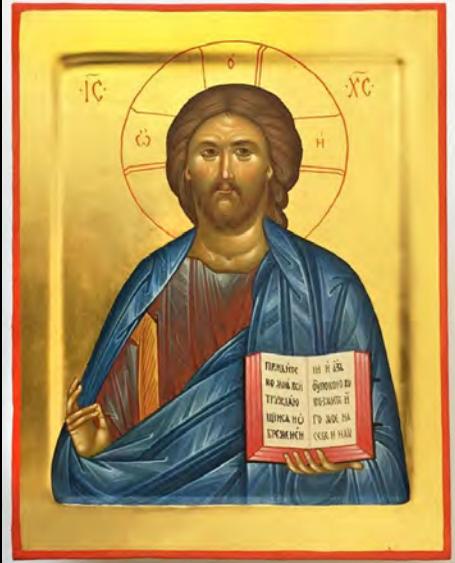
The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 67 No 30 8th Weekend After Pentecost July 25-26, 2020

SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND INNER HEALING

Do you truly believe that you are a “child” of God and that you were reborn in Christ at your initiation into the Church? If you don’t, then you live in powerlessness when confronting evil and suffering. Without this understanding, you are not able to derive the great amount of life that God offers you through Scripture, personal prayer, the Sacraments and the Christian community. This way of living is not God’s dream for us. His dream is that we have the support and help that the Church and an active spiritual life can provide for us as we make our life’s journey.

Inner Healing Prayer is one way to see fulfilled in our lives the spiritual growth that Scriptures promise, that is, it is a way to *experience* new life in ourselves.

Inner Healing Prayer is a way to experience the power and love of Jesus so strongly, personally, intimately and specifically in various areas of our inner lives that we (often dramatically) experience spiritual growth. What is not of Jesus dies and He lives in us ever more perfectly. Prayers that help us discover our true selves, free our true selves and heal our memories (this is not the only way to categorize inner healing prayers, but it is a way that can be helpful) reveal to us the truth of our Baptism: that Jesus has always been with us, has never abandoned us and is constantly working within us to bring us to the



perfection He so clearly sees is our destiny. Of course, that perfection will be fully attained only in heaven, the final stage of our spiritual growth, but it is obvious from the words of Jesus and Paul that we are meant to begin to experience it right now.

This is only true, of course, if we believe that we are a “child” of God and that He has spared nothing to help us truly understand this.

Do you believe you are God’s child?

Pray for Me

When we become ill, or when someone we love becomes ill, one of the first things we do is to ask others for their prayers. We might make these requests of our pastor, of a friend, of a family member or even of a total stranger sitting next to us in the doctor's office. But, do we remember to ask the saints to pray with us and for us as well?

Remember, the saints - who in this life were pleasing to God - now have great intercessory power before the Lord. Moreover, some saints have traditionally been regarded as being exceptionally helpful in prayers for the sick. Once such saint is Saint Panteleimon, whose feast we celebrate on July 27th.

Panteleimon was a doctor - a physician - who lived in the late third century. He, to-

gether with his mentor, instructor, and fellow physician, Saint Hermolaus, practiced medicine with great skill and with much success. They treated patients not only with medicine, but also with the power of prayer. Panteleimon, in fact, was denounced as a Christian and martyred for his Faith at the initiative of jealous doctors who could not cure as well as he could.

The name Panteleimon means "all merciful." Indeed this great saint was all merciful in extending his healing remedies to his patients in the form of medicine and prayer. Let us not neglect to call upon him today to pray with us, and to pray for us as well, as to pray for the doctors who treat us. The prayers of this great saint are powerful indeed!