

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of the Rich Young Ruler and Christ (Matthew 19:16-26)

A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this 12th weekend after the feast of Pentecost, our readings are taken again from St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians and Matthew's Gospel. In Paul's letter, he strongly reminds the Corinthians and us of the importance of Christ's Resurrection from the dead. He sees that event as the foundation of the Christian message. He asserts that if Christ did not resurrect from the dead, all that He, Christ, preached was untrue and, therefore, Paul's preaching was in vain. Christ's resurrection from the dead confirms the truth of what Christ preached, namely that: (1) we should do unto other as we would have them do unto us; (2) we should love others as we would have them love us, not basing our response on their response to us; (3) we should not judge others because it this behavior disposes us to want to be judged; and (4) we should love our neighbors as we love ourselves. This last one is, of course, the most difficult, since too often humans don't truly love themselves.

The Gospel story is about a rich young man who came to Jesus and asked Him: "what good must I do to possess everlasting life?" Jesus' response is twofold: (1) to learn how to treat others as you want to be treated and (2) don't get drawn into society's values, which are all about "having things of value and worth."

The second one is becoming more and more difficult in this age of



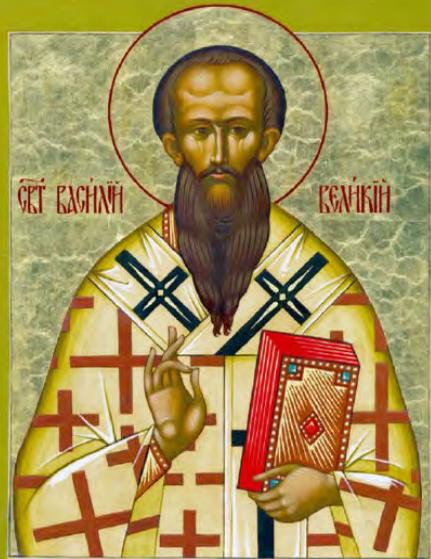
technology. It's easy to become very addicted to technology. Just think about how we, if we have one, become addicted to our cell phones. Look around you. People are always, me included, looking at their phones. Then consider the amount of time that many spend on Facebook, Instagram, TickTock, Twitter and other social media. It is truly amazing how much time people spend on social media. And to what end. It seems that social media promotes "connectivity" to others, which so many, especially during this Covid19 time, desperately need. Time on social media could also be time spent in prayer and true conversation with God. What is your addiction?

THOUGHTS ON GENESIS

In the last issue of this article, I had gotten to the part where God confronts Adam and Eve about what they have done and hears from them that the “serpent deceived” them and they ate.

Having heard all that He needed, God pronounced judgment, turning first to the serpent. Unlike the man and the woman, He did not need to interrogate the serpent to learn more of his part in this catastrophe. As a chaos creature, the serpent’s role was clear and his fault obvious. God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all animals.” The serpent might have been *arum* (shrewd), but he was now *arur* (cursed). Though one of the living things and animals, he was cursed and punished above them all.

The curse consisted of humiliation: “on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life” - you will go through life in lowliness, so abased and cast to the ground that you “shall eat its dust.” The sentence of being forced to go on its belly has led some biblical commentators throughout the ages to surmise that originally the serpent had a different destiny. *Genesis Rabbah*, a Jewish midrash commentary on this passage, says, for example, “When the Holy One, blessed be He, said to the serpent, ‘Upon your belly you shall go,’ ministering angels descended and cut off his hands and feet and his cries resounded from one end of the world to the other’. Rabbi Issi and Rabbi Hoshaya in the name of Rabbi Hiyya the Elder said,



‘The Holy One, blessed be He, said to the serpent, “I made you that you should go upright like man, but you would not, hence upon your belly you shall go.” This interpretation regards the serpent, who was more shrewd than all other beasts, as having a greater destiny than the other beasts, but as forfeiting this destiny through its actions. Read as history or biology, this seems unlikely, but it is quite in keeping with a mythological reading of the story. A change is wrought in the serpent and in his destiny, even as a change is wrought in those of the man and the woman.

This story looks how a more primitive people attempted to make sense out of creation.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON EASTERN CATHOLIC CHURCHES

Question: If the Catholic Church is “one, holy, catholic and apostolic,” why is it that the East does things so differently from the West? Why can’t we all be the same?

Why doesn’t everyone like a particular food or a particular type of music? The Catholic Church is *one* because we share the same faith, not because we do everything the same way. Uniformity of faith is a basic requirement for membership in the church, but uniformity of practice is not now - and *never* has been - a part of our church tradition.

Let’s go back in time to the days of the apostles to see if we can’t but a handle on this. When the apostles went out from Jerusalem to preach the good news, the people they went to had different traditions and different languages (even though most were subjects to the Roman emperors). The Liturgical starting point for Eastern worship seems to have been the Divine Liturgy of St James, from which all other liturgies are derived (or, at least, that’s the thinking of many, but not all, scholars).

Ancient tradition tells us that St Mark went to Alexandria, from which we later get the Divine Liturgy of St. Mark. That Liturgy was, in turn, modified for the Ethiopians and later for the Ge’ez Church in Eritrea. Why was it modified? Well, language would be one reason. All early Liturgies were celebrated (in the East we normally say “served”) in the language of the people.

Both St Paul and St Peter went to Antioch, and the people probably followed a Greek Liturgy. Later the Melkites would follow the Byzantine custom - again, because of the influence of the government and the trade routes. Later, under the influence of the Muslims, they shifted to Arabic.

From popular tradition we believe that St Thomas went to India, where the Christians call themselves St Thomas Christians. They developed their own linguistic variations on the liturgy. Unfortunately, due



to the vagaries of history, we know very little about the early Liturgy used there. Today St Thomas Christians are part of the Syriac tradition.

The Liturgy in Rome was originally in Greek, and only in the fourth century did it shift to Latin, and that was a slow process. Because “all roads lead to Rome” the Liturgy here was influenced especially by Milan in the fourth and fifth centuries. And, conversely, when German pilgrims came to Rome, they returned to their homes using the Gallic Rite.

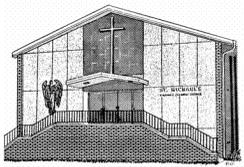
Next time more about our Church.

St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



OUR FRONT PORCH



As many are aware, we are attempting to fix the front porch of the Church. We have started the repairs and now only wait to seal the cement. We will also be raising a number of slabs of concrete walk.

In the meantime, we have having people attending the Liturgy to enter from the northside front door. I must admit that this is an easier way to enter the church than from the front steps. Once inside the church, there is only one set of stairs that must be traversed. We plan on having this completed before winter. I would thank all who are attending for their understanding. Even with distance seating, we still have room available for others if you wish to attend.



LIVING THE NEW LIFE

There are an unlimited number of ways to feed your soul. The best place to start is with daily prayer. It is truly the cornerstone of the spiritual life. Sometimes people will argue and assert that going to church on Sunday is the cornerstone of the spiritual life. But there are tens of millions of people who go to church every Sunday but do not have a vibrant spiritual life.



The habit of daily prayer may not sound exciting to you. If you feel that way, its because you haven't truly experienced daily prayer.

Now the truth of the matter is that most people have never been taught how to pray. Many of us learned to say prayers as children, but there is a whole spiritual world that most people have never experienced. It is a world most have never even been introduced to. It is not just saying some basic prayers that someone else has written.

So, let me ask you a question: Has anyone ever taught you how to pray? If you answer is no or "not really" or "I'm not sure," then I will hopefully give you some ideas about how to pray. It is disappointing,

(Continued on page 8)

HOW TO PERSONALLY EXPERIENCE THE DIVINE LITURGY

The Liturgy of the Church draws upon every resource available in the Church. Generation upon generation of Christians have expressed their response to the gracious economy of divine condescension and the mystery of salvation. The Church has filtered much out of the vast spiritual production of the prayer experience of myriads of Christian souls, ordered and structured it, and has made it its own language for its common prayer. It is a rich and complex heritage. Its range is without any apparent limits. It knows how to exalt the great and magnificent mystery of the Holy Trinity as well as to honor the humblest and most ordinary saint. The liturgy of the Church takes the common created materials of nature and uses them to incarnate the energies of God. Water, wine, bread, oil, grain, metal, wood colorful pigments, threads and cloth, wax and wicks, flowers, resins/incense all join in a chorus expressing divine grace in the liturgy of worship. The Liturgy of the Church transforms the day and the nights, the seasons of time, incorporating them into the Kingdom of God. It knows how to lift up daily food into the sphere of the holy and sacred. But most important of all, the liturgy of the Church knows how to



offer bread and wine, and in the offering to manifest here on earth, the eternal Kingdom. For it is in the Eucharist, that the ancient promise of unity of the Creator with the creature is realized. Within the four walls, the ceiling and the floor of the temple, space and time are transfigured. The Church is gathered in its fullness, and every element of the kingdom is gathered together manifesting the life of humanity in the life of God. Present are Christ in the eucharistic mystery, the believers, the saints of the Church triumphant. The melody of prayer reaches its apogee in the glorious experience the primordial unity of the Archetype with its image and likeness. In the Eucharistic liturgy, the patristic apophthegma (a short cryptic remark containing some general or generally accepted truth) “God became man, that man might become god” is realized and the meaning of St. Peter’s invitation that human beings become “partakers of divine nature” is culminated.

Indeed in the Liturgy, we join with Jesus, as represented by the symbol for food (bread and wine), in worshiping the Father and the Father’s response is to transform the life for which we are thankful.

BECOMING AN ADULT CHILD OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

As I have been thinking more about this article, it dawned on me that when I finally became an adult child of my earthly father, I no longer feared his punishment for doing something that he may not have liked. Rather, my attitude became one that wanted to do everything in my power to bring honor to my father, whose name I have. I also knew that the way that I could bring honor to him was by doing everything in my power to be the very best at whatever I chose to do. That is how I saw him live! That is the person I wanted to become!

I think this aptly applies also to our Heavenly Father. We have to develop to a point where we want to bring “honor” to Him by the way that we live.

We bring Him honor by attempting to grow in our likeness of Him as He revealed through the Person of Jesus, the Christ. Its all about the “DOS”, as I said in the last issue, instead of the “DON’T”. If I only focus on not doing those things characterized as sins, I don’t really change and become more like Jesus and I don’t bring the Father any honor. It is only when I attempt to imitate Jesus, the One Who the Father sent in order to reveal to me how I

should live as His child, that I am changed and bring Him honor.

Quite frequently this means that I have to change my idea about who GOD IS. The problem has been that we humans have repeatedly attempted to make God in our “image”. We want Him to be this “super-human” who acts like a human but has infinite powers. We want Him to dislike the people we dislike and to punish the people that we feel have done wrong. We can’t really think of Him being merciful to the people who we judge being “bad people” because we judge them to be bad. Therefore He has to punish them because we feel that they should be punished.

The real problem is that God is beyond our comprehension and we cannot really know how He truly operates. We anthropomorphize Him, projecting the same emotions on Him that we have. This, of course, is a wrong conception of God. He doesn’t get angry or vengeful. He doesn’t like some people and reject others. Why? Because He is the life-force within all people and so He is intimately joined to all human beings.

How do you see God?



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, August 23 - 12th Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 3
10:00 AM - Special Intention of Greg & Esther Petrovich

13th WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - Tone 4

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

Tuesday, August 25 - Return of Apostle Bartholomew's Relics
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday, August 26 - Adrian & Natalie, Martyrs
No Service Scheduled

Thursday, August 27 - Poemen, Venerable
No Service Scheduled

Friday, August 28 - Moses the Ethiopian, Venerable
No Service Scheduled

Saturday, August 29 - Beheading of John the Baptist
No Service Scheduled

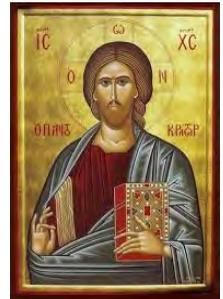
Sunday, August 30 - 13th Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 4
10:00 AM - Special Intention

(Continued from page 5 - Living The New Life)

sad and tragic that so many of us can make our way so far through life without being taught how to really pray. But it also means that so many amazing possibilities are still undiscovered before you. It means the best is definitely yet to come.

Nothing will change your life so completely, absolutely and forever like learning how to really pray. In prayer we learn who we are and what we are here for, what matters most and what matters least. Through prayer we discover the-best-version-of-ourselves, and are given the courage to celebrate and defend it in each moment of each day. In prayer we learn how to love and be loved, because we discover that we have been loved, are loved and will continually be loved by God.

It is an unavoidable fact that our lives do not unfold as we hope and expect them to. Prayer can truly help with our disappointment.



BECOMING A HEALING PRESENCE



I ended the last issue of this article by quoting from a book by Father Schmemmann. In that book he reminds us, “From the very beginning Christianity has been the proclamation of joy, of the only possible joy on earth.... Of all accusations against Christians, the most terrible one was uttered by Nietzsche when he said that Christians have no joy.”

A series of quotations from his book are:

- If there is something that we - the serious, adult and frustrated Christians of the 20th century - look at with suspicion, it is certainly joy.... The modern world has relegated joy to the category of “fun” and “relaxation.”
- We are called to live in the world seeing everything in it as a revelation of God, a sign

sign of His presence, the joy of His coming.

- Christian mission (vocation) is always at its beginning. It is today that I am sent back into the world in joy and peace. Joy, however, is not something one can define or analyze. One enters into joy. “Enter thou into the joy of the Lord” (Matthew 25:21). We enter through the source and the fulfillment of joy, the very sacrament of joy, the Eucharist.

In his Epistle, St James challenges his readers regarding joy: “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials”. Joy amid trials is counter-intuitive. Our first reaction to trials on any sort is to shrink and decry the situation. Our gut reaction is to avoid trials. Jesus experienced our inclination when in the Garden He said, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me” (Matthew 26:39). Going beyond our initial reaction, we say with Jesus, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” And therein we can count it all joy as St. James suggests.

Our vocation is to be real witnesses to the joy and peace of the Holy Spirit, to that new life of which we are made partakers in the Church.

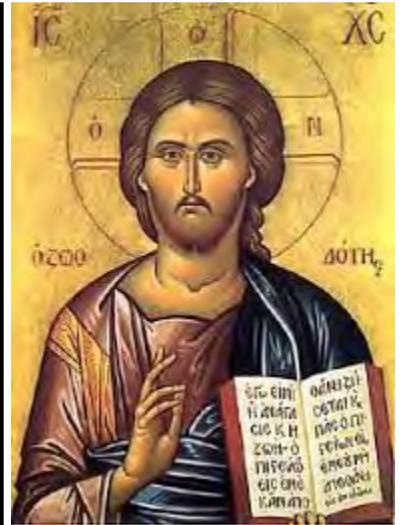
St Hesychius of Jerusalem has some words we can apply to joy. He said, “Great care should be taken to preserve that which is precious...the invocation of Jesus Christ.” It is no coincidence that the word *invocation* has a special connotation of “in-vocation,.” or “in my vocation.” We can apply the words of St Hesychius to preserving that joy in our heart, that joy (read pearl of great price) that Christ said He came to bring us.

This joy comes to us when we strive to be a healing presence to others. We are healed as we attempt to be a healing presence to others. That is the Jesus way.

SOMETHING MORE ABOUT SACRED SCRIPTURE

Church Tradition holds the inerrancy of Scripture. It does not, however, vouch for all the interpretations of Scripture. One of the real problems with understanding infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture is precisely the problem with interpretation. The Scripture is not always literal in the modern fundamentalist understanding. The Bible is rich in metaphor and poetic imagery, especially in the Old Testament. Aspects of the Scripture become better understood with the advance of science and archaeology. As an example, the statement that "the sun knows his going down" personifies the sun in the way that those who believed the sun to be a god would view it. This occurs because that formula for referring to the sun had become merely a commonplace of language. Secondly, the sun does not "go down," let alone know about it. What is meant by the statement is simply that the sun behaves in the way God intended for it to. Sunset occurs in the natural order of things because that is the way God has ordained matters. If the statement was more than a commonplace of language and metaphor, then it would strongly hint at a shadow of sun god worship in Israel. This kind of metaphorical statement is much more lovely, poetic and pleasing than saying, for example, "the earth rotates on its axis so that the sun appears to go down, and this happens because that is the God-created normal order of things." The same is true of the time frame in the creation narrative and the details given of the creation. The Scripture gives us the meaning of the events, not the complete details.

The inerrancy of Sacred Scripture has nothing to do with detailed, historical accuracy. The scriptures are not meant to be "history." They are meant, first and foremost, to be "inspirational". So, for example, to believe that the world was created in six days because Genesis tells us this, is a distortion of the



intended meaning of Genesis.

This is just as true of the New Testament as it is of the Old Testament. Again, they are not meant to present historical data. Some people insist that, if the Scriptures don't present correct historical data, they are worthless or false.

What the Scriptures are attempting to do is to relate all things to God - that all creation has a real relationship with God, Him being the Creator. Since there is no time in eternity, the creation of the universe cannot be limited to any real kind of timeframe.



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, STL, Ph.D.
Vol. 67 No 33 12th Weekend After Pentecost August 22-23, 2020

SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND INNER HEALING

In the last issue I shared with you that spiritual growth through inner healing leads to a healthier life. Similarly, inner has brought about cures for physical illnesses. Since many of our physical illnesses are a part cause by psychological and spiritual pain, when this pain is healed through inner healing prayer the physical problems often disappear.

Yet we must be careful not to presume that every physical disease has its roots in our psyches or spirits. Some physical diseases are merely physical and need the attention of a competent physician and the love of Jesus mediated through prayer for physical healing. We do need, however, to be aware of the strong correlation between physical and inner healing, and between physical and inner suffering.

For often when we are sick it is a sign from deep within us that something in our minds or in our

spirits needs attention - a sign that we need to grow - and when we do that which our inner selves need, we are healed. Some of us will stop long enough to look at our inner selves only when we are physically ill - only then are we ready to admit our need for change and are we willing to try to change, even though the change may be painful. Inner healing and physical healing are connected, then, in many different ways.

In inner healing prayer we use our spirits and our minds in specific ways to pray. Intuitions come from the Holy Spirit into our spirits and find expression through our imagination. If we try to express these intuitions using only our intellects our prayer will be rational and somewhat dry. This is not to say that intellect is an inferior function of our minds, but only that it is not as useful in this kind of praying as imagination is. Imagination makes our prayer come alive.



The Danger of Riches

One day, an Indian boy found a large pearl. It represented the fulfillment of all his hopes and dreams. His days of hardship and toil would be over. He would never have to work again. But, when he tried to sell the pearl, his real problems began. Buyers tried to trick him, bandits tried to attack him, and even his friends tried to manipulate him. Possessing great wealth was nothing like he expected it would be, so he took the pearl and threw it back into sea.

The boy in this story is quite a contrast to the young man of whom Jesus spoke in the Gospel reading for this Sunday. Jesus spoke of a young man who desired to be justified by God. He had faithfully kept all the commandments, but Jesus told him that there

was one thing he still needed to do: sell all he had and give to the poor. With that, the young man went away saddened because he was not able to easily part with all his possessions. Jesus then spoke one of His most enduring statements, "It will be easier for a camel to pass through the needles eye, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." (Matthew 21:24)

What type of hold do our possessions have on us? Are we willing to share what we have with others, including our time, our talents, as well as our treasure? Everything that we have is a gift from God, which must be freely shared with others as a gift. Our Lord Himself tells us, "The gifts you have freely received, now give as a gift." (Matthew 10:8)