

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of the Catch of Fish (Luke 5:1-11)

A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this 17th weekend after Pentecost, our readings are taken from Paul's 2nd letter to the Corinthians and Luke's Gospel. Paul asserts in the passage that we hear that we humans are the "temples" of our living God whether we are aware of it or not. If we believe in Jesus Christ, this awareness becomes real and helps us to fulfill the meaning and purpose of our lives.

What does it mean to be a temple of God's own Spirit? It means that we recognize or share, albeit in a finite way, in the powers that are uniquely God's powers. For example, He has the power to create. So do we, although our power is much more limited than His. We have the power of free will, although it is much more constrained by our passions, fears and desires. We have His power to love, although the ability to love unconditionally does not come naturally. We do share, however, in His powers. His Spirit represents His powers that He shares with us.

The passage we hear from Luke's Gospel relates the calling of the first Apostles. What is important to note is the "calling." We, like the disciples are called to be one with Christ in exercising God's powers within us. Jesus exercised, as a man, God's powers in various ways. These ways influenced how He lived. We are called to "follow Him", that is to follow Him in HOW HE LIVED.

How did He live? He lived with love for all others. He accepted all others. He was honest with all others. He helped all others. He also met the challenges of His life with hope and trust in His Father, His Abba.

This is how we are called to live. Why? For our own benefit and growth. God only calls us



to live like Jesus because He knows that if we do, we will become all that we can possibly be - we can become the persons that God envisioned when He created us.

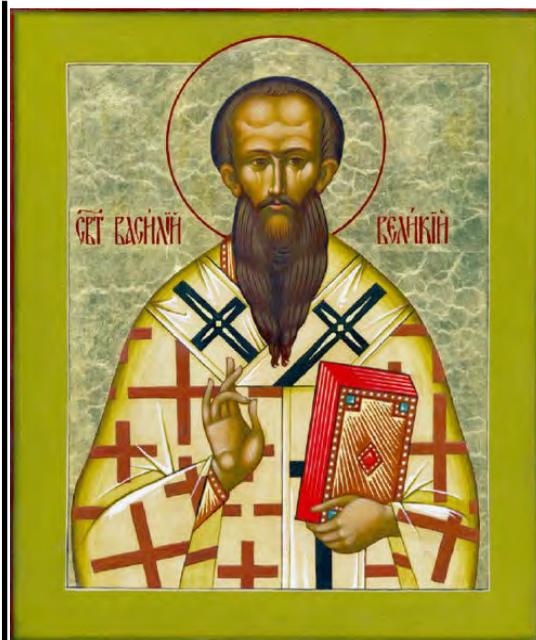
All of God's actions in our lives are meant to help us grow into the persons that we can be. Each of us has been given the potential to grow into other christi - others who are anointed by God. We will never become THE CHRIST but we surely will, if we adopt the Jesus way of living, become more "like Christ" which is the true goal of this earthly existence.

We are given opportunities during this lifetime to spiritually grow. It is for us to freely seize these opportunities to grow. Why are we here? To grow into the persons that God envisioned upon our creation. Does this make sense to you?

THOUGHTS ON GENESIS

In the last issue I had reached the part of the narrative where God leaves a sentence unfinished even though the intent is clear. It was God's prerogative to "know good and evil" and possess such sovereign moral autonomy. It was man's role to accept God's sovereignty and to be guided by God's decisions, not to snatch the right to be the captain of his own soul. Man had rebelliously reached out his hand to take from the forbidden tree. Now, lest he send out his hand again and take also of the tree of life, he must be expelled from the garden.

Commentators have sometimes suggested that this barring of man from the tree of life was in reality an act of divine kindness, saving man from an endless life of misery and fallen horror. That is a valid theological observation but not true exegesis (i.e., analysis of the text). In the text, God had promised that if man ate from the forbidden tree he would surely die, and this refusal of access to the tree of life must be interpreted as the fulfillment of that promise - in other words, as a punishment, not a mercy. Man had been created mortal and subject to death, a creature of dust. The presence of the tree of life in the midst of the garden suggests that God had intended immortality for him if he had continued to obey. But now man had forfeited such a provision of immortality - he would be denied access to the tree of life and would return to the dust from which he was taken. God's



threatened sentence would thus be carried out.

Again we must remember that this Genesis account was before God's revelation through Jesus Christ about the true nature of human life. The Jewish narrator was only attempting to explain what he found in the existing world. This was not "dictated" by God, giving to humanity a description of what really happened.

Humans were made to life-die-and-live-again. Not understanding how God actually created humanity, a story had to be developed to help people make sense out of this earthly existence. We humans were made in His "image" and given the potential to grow in His "likeness."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON EASTERN CATHOLIC CHURCHES

Question: Do Eastern Catholics have eucharistic adoration, exposition and benediction?

The full answer is NO, these practices are not Eastern. These elements of Latin tradition grew out of the need for people to have a devotion that was accessible to them. In the East, the Eucharist is not something to be “adored” or “exposed” but, rather, something to be eaten or consumed. The meaning: the Eucharist is sacred food which God gives us to help us focus on spiritually growing. We know that Christ said, and we repeat this during the Divine Liturgy: TAKE EAT..TAKE DRINK. No where does the Eastern Church state: COME ADORE THE EUCHARIST.

Consuming the Eucharist is a behavior that helps us think about our relationship with God. We use icons to remind us of Jesus and the others who have shown us the way to approach our relationship to God. Eastern Christians encounter God in adoration by standing or sitting before an icon of Christ Who is the image of the Father.

Eucharistic benediction grew out of the Latin Church’s desire to offer more to the people than simply spending time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. Benediction offered formal prayer and the blessing granted by the priest with the Blessed Sacrament. Because the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament never really developed in the Eastern Churches, the idea of benediction arose only in the beginning of the Eastern Churches union with Rome, people wanting to be “Catholic”.

Eastern Christians are Catholic even though they don’t necessarily perform the same rituals as the Roman Church or embrace the same interpretation of theology as the Roman Church. One is not right and the other wrong. They are just different.

It should be noted that Eastern Churches do retain the Holy Eucharist in a tabernacle on the altar for the sick. It is not there to be adored. The eternal lamp



that we see in the altar area is there for the icons on the back wall and not for the Eucharist in the tabernacle.

Again it is a different understanding of the true meaning of the Blessed Sacrament. It is, in the Eastern Churches, mainly a means of “worship” of God and not “adoration.” If we in faith approach and partake of the Holy Eucharist, we assert our belief that God’s life force is within us, calling us and sustaining us in existence. Christ’s Body and Blood is not meant to be “adored” but, rather, integrated into our very lives by our consuming them.

St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



ADULT DISCUSSION



I am currently planning with the three deacons in the parishes within our Michigan portion of

the Eparchy, a series of online Adult Discussion sessions. Each session will be focused on an article that will be presented in advance. Participants will be asked to first read the article and then participate in the discussion. It will be offered to all the parishes in Michigan. We will be looking at a number of different topics, some, obviously, more difficult than others. We will not try to “dumb-down” the content so that we might increase the knowledge of those participating in these sessions. These sessions are designed to challenge participants to think about our faith and to come to an adult understanding of the content.



LIVING THE NEW LIFE

As I expressed in the last installment of this article, our lives change when our habits change. Habits are one of the most powerful influences in our lives whether we are aware of it or not.



There is so much uncertainty in life, so much that is beyond our circle of influence, but with our habits we get to exercise our God-given free will and shape our destiny.

It is important to note that what has happened to us in the past is not what we are. We are not our successes and accomplishments. We are not even who we are today or who we have become so far. We are who and what we are still capable of becoming. We are realized and unrealized potential. God sees us in our potential and He aches to see us embrace our best, truest highest selves. He yearns to help us and accompany us in that quest.

Philosophers speak of “being.” Anything that exists is a being. Angels are beings. God is a being. We are beings. There are different types of beings. We are not God, or an angel. We are human *(Continued on page 8)*

HOW TO PERSONALLY EXPERIENCE THE DIVINE LITURGY

I have been exploring various ways to “personally” experience the Divine Liturgy. In order to do this, we must take time to actually think about the words that we say and the actions or rituals that we observe. They all speak to something deeper. They all have a message for us.

For example, we begin the Divine Liturgy with the declaration that we believe that the Kingdom of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is **BLESSED** - that God’s Kingdom is holy and something that we recognize we exist in because we believe in God. His Kingdom exists right now. It is not something that is yet to come. Our task is to attempt to make it real by the way that we live and treat other.

This declaration is followed by the Great Litany (the first litany of the Liturgy and the Litany of Peace). Are you actually aware of the fact that we are praying for **PEACE** in our world and our lives. Being aware of what we are praying for is essential. This means that we must want to make each of the petitions **OUR PETITIONS** before God.

One of the most powerful of the petitions, I believe, is that we pray: *That we be delivered from all affliction, wrath and need* and then ask God to *protect us, save us, have mercy on us and preserve us*. If we truly attempt to make these petitions our petitions, life begins to change and our whole experience of the Divine Liturgy



changes. We begin to realize that we are praying for things that are truly important for us.

This Great Liturgy is followed by a priestly prayer to first recognize God as someone whose mercy is without limits and whose love for man is beyond expression. This should trigger in our hearts and minds some sense of Who God is. At this point we also request His abundant mercies and benefits.

Again, if we take time to reflect on the prayers that we share together, the Divine Liturgy takes on a totally new and different meaning. It is not some ritual that we just “perform” in a perfunctory manner, believing that the ritual itself puts us in touch with God. We have to mean the prayers that we say. They have to be **OUR PRAYERS** and not just something that we rattle off, believing that they will appease our God and make him more favorably disposed toward us. Just take one prayer at a time and reflect on it.

BECOMING AN ADULT CHILD OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

For some reason this topic has been rattling around in my head for some time and I keep getting insights about it. Therefore I feel that God is inspiring me to write about this.

I recently realized that perhaps one of the inspirational scripture passages that is foundational to this topic is what Paul says in his first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 13:11) where he writes: *When I was a child I used to talk like a child, think like a child, reason like a child. When I became a man I put childish ways aside.* He wrote this in reference to his understanding of the message of Jesus.

I have become convinced in my old age that we have to “become a grown up Christian”, that is someone who truly looks at God as an adult and not project onto Him very childish ideas.

When of the childish ideas that I find is prevalent among Christians is that they want to believe that God reacts to the events of life as they do. They want Him to punish the people they feel should be punished and love only the people they love. They often want Him to be just a “rule-maker” who only expects humans to “FOLLOW

THE RULES”. In doing this they mess His call to personal transformation and change. Personal transformation is not result that comes about when we just keep the rules. That approach is not transformative.

Personal transformation results when I look at my attitudes, ideas and behaviors and assess how closely they imitate the attitudes, ideas and behaviors of Jesus Christ.

Unfortunately too frequently even good people want God to be more like them instead of them being more like God as seen in the Person of Jesus Christ. People seem to object to God being loving, kind and gracious to all other people, even those that they characterize as being

bad. They ask: *How can God love someone who acts badly and sins.* They believe that God is supposed to have the same values as humans without realizing that if this is true, He would no longer be God.

Of course to be an Adult Child of the Heavenly Father, you have to learn how to trust that He genuinely love you. You have to come to see Him as a loving Father Who only wants the very best for you. How do you see God?



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

Schedule of Services

Sunday, September 27 - 17th Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 8
10:00 AM - Health of John Dicky Sr.; John & Janet Dicky

18th WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - Tone 1

Monday, September 28 - Chariton, Venerable-Confessor
No Service Scheduled

Tuesday, September 29 - Cyriacus, Venerable
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday, September 30 - Gregory Illuminator, Bishop-Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Thursday, October 1 - Protection of the Mother of God
No Service Scheduled

Friday, October 2 - Cyprian, Bishop-Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Saturday, October 3 - Denis the Areopagite, Bishop-Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Sunday, October 4 - 18th Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 1
10:00 AM - Special Intention

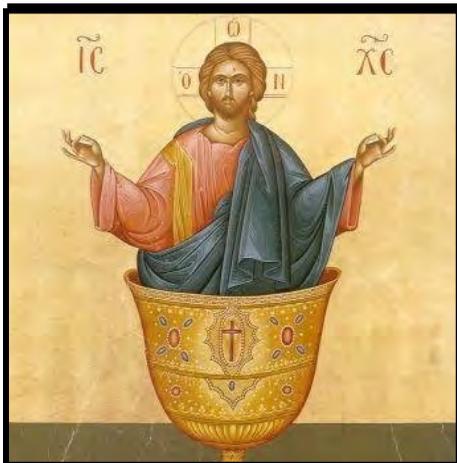
(Continued from page 5 - Living The New Life)

beings. One of the most amazing things about human beings is that incredible changes can take place within us. Our beings are not fixed, stagnant or static; they are genuinely changeable. This is a beautiful thing, primarily because from it springs endless hope.

Here is something worth pondering: The being of something changeable - you - is not only what it is, but what it still can be. You are not only who and what you are today; your essence or being also includes who you are capable of becoming - who you still can be. This idea expresses the basis for hope in our potential, and potential is a beautiful thing. We see endless potential in small children and young people, but at some point we stop talking about it. This also probably means we stop thinking about our own potential. How do you see yourself? Do you see your potential for change?

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

BECOMING A HEALING PRESENCE



I truly believe that what we are called to be, as followers of Jesus Christ, are “healing persons”. Jesus was a “healing person” because He took time to actually support and help others. We are called to do the same in our present world.

In order to do this, however, I need to know where my boundaries are and to allow others to know my limitations. Many in the helping professions and in the clergy suffer from a savior complex. This complex, also called a martyr complex or messiah complex, is based on the notion that I am, or am destined to be, the savior of others by my own power. Of course, this attitude can be lethal to the healing and well-being of others.

A savior complex can be

subtle and the person who has such a self-image can be unaware of it, simply because the behavior can appear to have good motives and can be beneficial to others. Suffice it to say, we need to do what we are asked to do by others, and we need to *not* do what they don't want us to do. No one wants us to take over their lives. Although they may act as if they want us to make decisions about their lives, they will only resent it if we attempt to do so. We need to grant others freedom to make their own choices and to live their own lives. I, as a healing presence, walk with others in their pain and in their joy. I don't take on their suffering in a futile effort to make them feel better. I doesn't work.

Empathy provides energy to others because it makes them aware that we understand their suffering and don't judge, condemn, or try to fix their problems. Sympathy, by contrast, takes on the feelings and pain of others in an effort to identify with their plight. (*Sympathy* here is used in its current cultural context. Linguistically, sympathy can connote compassion, but it generally means non-compassion in today's world).

A person who is a healing presence to another person provides empathy in abundance without accepting or expressing sympathy. Sympathy for another person simply magnifies the problem. Sympathy is codependence and pride in disguise. If someone else is feeling depressed, it doesn't do him or her any good if I become sympathetic and take on the depressed feelings. Other people need hope and strength, not another depressed person to pull them deeper into darkness. To be a healing person to be empathetic not sympathetic.

SOMETHING MORE ABOUT SACRED SCRIPTURE

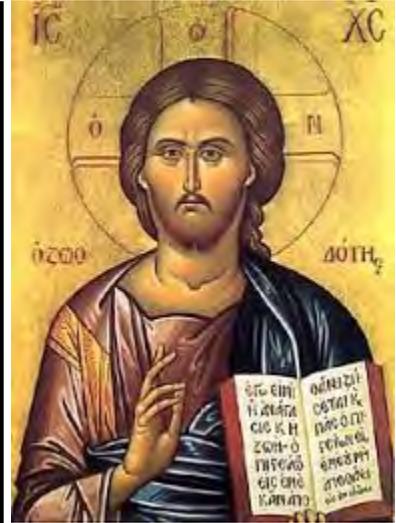
The commission to share the revelation of God through the person of Jesus Christ, was fulfilled by those Apostles and apostolic men who under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit committed the message of salvation to writing.

What is the message of salvation? The message is that God revealed through Jesus a way of living that allows humans who follow Him and imitate His way of living to spiritually grow and become truly and genuinely transformed. The purpose of this earthly existence is to “change” and “grow”, to become more complete as a human being and to be “more like” Jesus.

In order to keep the Gospel forever whole and alive within the Church, the Apostles left bishops as their successors, “handing over” to them “the authority to teach in their own place.” The sacred tradition, therefore, and Sacred Scripture of both the Old and New Testaments are like a mirror in which the pilgrim Church on earth looks at God, from who she has received everything, until she is brought finally to see Him as He is, face to face.

And so the apostolic preaching, which is expressed in a special way in the spired books, was to be preserved by an unending succession of preachers until the end of time. Therefore the Apostles, handing on what they themselves had received, warn the faithful to hold fast to the traditions which they have learned either by word of mouth or by letter, and to fight in defense of the faith handed on once and for all. Now what was handed on by the Apostles includes everything which contributes toward the holiness of life and increase in faith of the people of God; and so the Church, in her teaching, life and worship, perpetuates and hands on to all generations all that she herself is, all that she believes.

This does not mean that wrong interpretations



are eliminated. We see that throughout the history of the Church, various priests and bishops came up with ideas about God’s revelation which the Church then judged to be heretical. It is our belief that God’s Spirit protects the Church from falling into error. Councils are called to discern the truth of all dogmas.

The Sacred Scriptures, because they are meant to be inspirational, have often been interpreted in ways that do not match our basic faith. It is important that we rely on the Church’s tradition to interpret them.



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, STL, Ph.D.
Vol. 67 No 38 17th Weekend After Pentecost September 26-27, 2020

SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND INNER HEALING

Christians throughout the ages have often misinterpreted Jesus' words to mean that we must never express who we really are, our true selves. A part of the Christian tradition has taken this verse and several like it about dying to self (e.g., Galatians 2:20 and Col 3:10) and used them as a justification for not growing spiritually and finding our true selves at all. The point of what Jesus is saying in Matthew 16:25 is that by following His way we ultimately *will* find our true selves. Because we human beings have a natural fear of that Truth, however - a fear based in lines we have believed about ourselves, but a real fear nonetheless - and because it is often difficult and painful to search for that Truth, we have all too easily found in Jesus'; words an excuse to avoid all that fear and effort and pain. And in our fear we refuse to reconcile our conclusion with the total Gospel, the Gospel that tells us that Jesus wants

us to have abundant life and to know the Truth that will set us free.

It should be asserted that because God created us to be who we are, He does not want us to lose our personal identity and become someone else. He thought that Who He created was the right person. He wants us to find out who we really are and to become all that we can possibly be.

How sad - for us and for the world. It is sad for us because we never find out who we are, and because we think Jesus asked us not to, and so we mistakenly think that by living this way we are the essence of Gospel-

people. And it is sad for the world, because the world looks at us and says (in a certain sense, rightfully so), "If that is what it means to live as a Christian, I don't want it!"

Personal transformation does not change WHO WE ARE, it only rounds off the rough edges - it helps us become who we truly are meant to be.



Christ Continues to Catch People

He told Simon and his companions to sail off a little from the land and to let down the net for a draught. But they replied that they had been toiling the whole night and had caught nothing. However, in the name of Christ, they let down the net, and immediately it was full of fish. By a visible sign and by a miraculous type and representation, they were fully convinced that their labor would be rewarded, and the zeal displayed in spreading out the net of the gospel teaching would be fruitful. Within this net they should most certainly catch the shoals of the heathen. But note that neither Simon nor his companions could draw the net to land. Speechless from fright and astonishment for their wonder had made them mute, they beckoned to their partners,

to those who shared their labors in fishing, to come and help them in securing their prey.

For many have taken part with the Holy Apostles in their labors, and still do so, especially those who inquire into the meaning of what is written in the holy Gospels. Yet besides them there are also others: the pastors and teachers and rulers of the people, who are skilled in the doctrines of truth. For the net is still being drawn, while Christ fills it, and calls to conversion those who, according to the Scripture phrase, are in the depths of the sea, that is to say, those who live in the surge and waves of worldly things.

Saint Cyril of Alexandria