

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of Saint Thomas -- October 6th

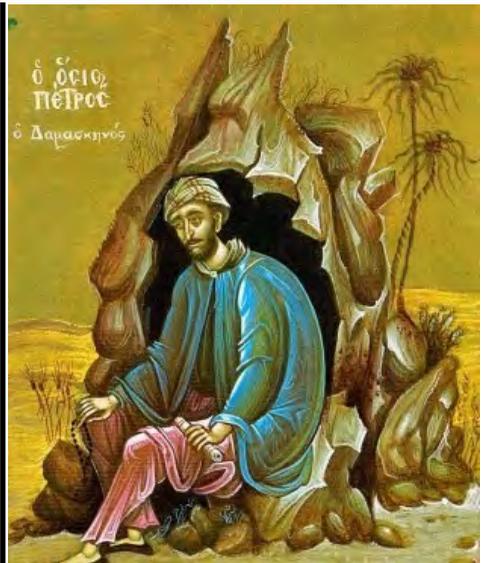
A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this 18th weekend after Pentecost, our readings are again taken from St. Paul's 2nd letter to the Corinthians and Luke's Gospel. Some of Paul's most quotable phrases are contained in this letter. Our reading starts with these words: *He who sows sparingly will reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will reap bountifully.* Then he adds: *Everyone must give according to what he has inwardly decided.*

This tells us clearly that we have a choice with regard to how much we want to invest in embracing the Christian message of personal change. The more we invest, the greater will be the results. If you want to grow as a Christian, you have to decide *how much effort you are willing to put into this personal change and growth.* Of course if you put yourself half-heartedly into the effort, it will only result in half-hearted results.

The Gospel message, which has been characterized under the label as "Love of one's Enemy," begins with this statement: *Do to others what you would have them do to you.* This is the core of the Jesus message. The primary focus of the Jesus message is that we look at "others" as the source of our spiritual growth. As we are able to love all others unconditionally, regardless of how they treat us or how they think of us, we spiritually grow.

When we don't allow the thinking of our society and friends to govern our thinking but, rather the mind of Jesus, then we have an opportunity to spiritually grow. It doesn't matter what others think. It matters whether or not we embrace the thinking of Jesus. He tells us that we must attempt to love all



others, regardless of what they think about or do to us.

This is a challenge when in our modern society we think about those who "hate us." It always becomes an I-THEM thought. I hate them because they hate me and want to do violence to me.

Jesus tells us that this type of thinking only "limits" us in our spiritual development. Anytime there is an I-Them thought that comes to mind, we have to examine it and, hopefully reject it. It doesn't matter what others think about us. It is all about what we think about them. When we buy into an adversarial relationship with others because of their thinking, we lessen our ability to be children of God.

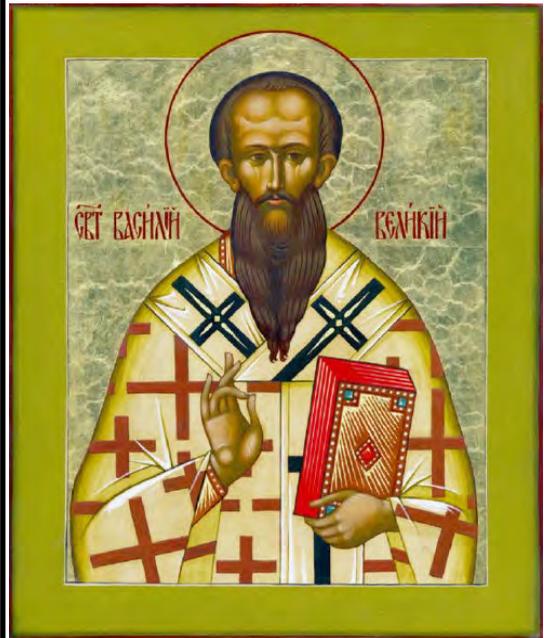
THOUGHTS ON GENESIS

While I know that some of my readers may have become numb to this on-going analysis of Genesis, it is my hope that my efforts have my readers come to a deeper understanding of Genesis. **IT IS A STORY! IT IS NOT HISTORY!** We must come to see it as that so that we don't buy into this crazy idea that Genesis tells us about the beginning of humankind. When this story is taken as history, we buy into so many different things. Like Original Sin and all that that idea entails.

Where I was at in this commentary, God sent Adam out from the garden of Eden. The word rendered sent out is the same used in the previous sentence (there awkwardly rendered as send out his hand), the Hebrew *shalach*. Its use here is intentional: lest the man send out his hand, God will send him out of the garden. Man's task on the outside will remain the same as before, for he must still serve the ground from which he was taken, tilling it together with its fruit. But on the outside, he will serve and till the ground in sorrow, far from God and the tree of life.

Consistently with His promise of punishment, therefore, God drove out the man from the garden. The Hebrew verb used here is a different one from the previous *shalach*; it is *garash*, a verb denoting a more intensive action. It is the verb used in Exodus 23:28 to describe the divine expulsion of the Canaanites from the Promised land.

At the east of the garden God placed the cherubim and the flaming sword



that whirled around to guard the way to the tree of life. Evidently entry to the garden was from the east, as is the case in temples of the ancient Near East (possibly to allow the rising sun to fall upon the image of the god set up in the western part of the temple). Entry to the tabernacle was also from the east. Accordingly, God stationed the cherubim at the entry to the garden, His throne guardians to bar the way, much as the Levites would bar unauthorized entry to the tabernacle in the wilderness. They were assisted by the flaming sword that whirled around.

Hopefully you, my readers, are getting a different sense of Genesis? What a story!

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON EASTERN CATHOLIC CHURCHES

Question: What do Eastern Catholic Churches teach about purgatory?

According to Jacques Le Goff, a French historian and prolific author specializing in the Middle Ages, particularly the 12th and 13th centuries maintains that the idea of **purgatory** as a physical place came into existence in Western Europe towards the end of the twelfth century. According to him, the conception involves the **idea** of a purgatorial fire, which he suggests "is expiatory and purifying not punitive like hell fire. It is an idea that only took root in Roman Catholic Christianity. Non-Catholic Christians don't buy into this idea and Eastern Catholic Christians approach the topic in a manner quite different from Roman Catholics.

First of all, the idea of a time-bound existence in the next dimension, which has no time, seems to be inconsistent. Purgatory, as conceived in the West, was thought to be "temporary" and a means of cleansing people of sins committed and not confessed. It led to the selling of "indulgences," which could be purchased from the Church and which could lessen the time a loved one spent in purgatory. This type of thinking was one of several real reasons for the Protestant Reformation.

The Eastern Church, because of its thoughts about *Theosis*, maintains that God created humans to be in an "eternal" cycle of growing in the likeness of God, as manifested in the person of Jesus Christ. This cycle is meant to ever increase a person's relationship with God since God created all humans to be united to Him. This process of eternal growth purifies humans and makes it possible for them to be in a relationship with God.

The idea of purgatory also grew out of the Church's idea of "praying for the deceased." Why do we pray for the deceased? We pray for the deceased for two reasons, I believe: (1) to remind us that they are alive



after human death, and (2) to maintain our contact with them. Death does not separate us from the people we love. We believe there is life after death and so we attempt to maintain our love relationship with persons who have gone on before us.

The Roman Catholic Church presently looks at the process of human purification in a slightly different way than it did in the 12th and 13th centuries. It seems to have come to a position which is more in line with the Eastern thinking.

Do you have questions?

St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



CONGRATULATIONS

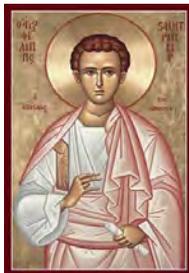
Leo & Mary LaDouceur

I would, on behalf of the Parish Family, congratulate Leo and Mary on the occasion of their 51st Wedding Anniversary. We ask God to bless them with health, happiness and length of days.

**Многая літа – Многая літа
God Grant You Many Years**

Energizing the 2020 St. Philip's Fast

This year we will attempt to energize our preparation for the Theophanies of Winter - namely Christmas and Theophany - by offering "virtual Adult Discussions" about topics of our faith. Sessions will be conducted by Reverend Deacons: Zenon Czornij of Immaculate Conception Parish in Hamtramck, James Frazer IV of St Michaels in Grand Rapids and Len Mier, Jr of our parish. The Fast begins on November 15th. As the time approaches we will be providing further information on how to be a part of this.



LIVING THE NEW LIFE

In order to live the new life, I cannot buy into the half-truth that says "I am who I am." You are who you are, but you are also who you are capable of becoming. It means that you really believe that God has not only created you in His image but He has also infused into you the potential to grow in His own likeness. You may not see it. You may feel stuck or trapped and you may be right now. But you do not have to stay stuck or trapped. God and your potential are ready to pull you out of all of this by developing a new habit of daily prayer. It helps unleash our potential for spiritual growth. And this is only one of many qualities that make it life's essential daily habit.



People often speak of forming new habits - a habit to be more productive and efficient, a habit to accomplish more, and so on. In adopting a habit of daily prayer, these outcomes are not our goal, but the habit of prayer can help you to achieve them.

Research has shown that it takes 21 days to establish a new habit in our lives, to sink its *(Continued on page 8)*

HOW TO PERSONALLY EXPERIENCE THE DIVINE LITURGY

I truly believe that it is important that we “assess” our reasons for coming to the Divine Liturgy. By saying this I don’t want to discourage people coming to pray. Rather, I want people to think more deeply what we are doing when we come to the Divine Liturgy.

It is not a ritual to ward off the wrath of a God who wants to punish us for making mistakes. Rather it is an opportunity for us to thank God for the Gift of Life. Of course this requires that we are thankful for the life that we have received.

I understand that when people have difficult challenges, especially those connected with illness and disease, that people find it difficult to be thankful for life. This requires, I believe that we recast “challenges” that life presents to us. Challenges are OPPORTUNITIES to CHANGE. As we are willing to reinterpret challengers as opportunities of spiritual growth, we can then become thankful for life.

God understood that we humans would be challenged by events in life. He sent His Son Jesus to show us the way to deal with the challenges of life. He showed us that “even death”, in the way that He had to experience it, doesn’t have to make us bitter about death and other challenges.

We gather in the Divine Liturgy to THANK GOD FOR THE LIFE THAT WE HAVE, even with all of its challenges. It is important that we approach the Divine Liturgy in this way. The Divine



Liturgy is not about “getting” something favorable from God. All that God grants through life is favorable since it is meant to help us spiritually grow. This is the attitude that we must accept as we celebrate the Divine Liturgy. Although we petition God for many things during the Divine Liturgy, it is important that we remember that we also pray for what is for our “benefit.” Only God knows what is truly beneficial for our well-being. What we must do is place our whole trust in a God who loves us and feel that He will provide with those things that are “beneficial to our well-being”. This, of course, requires faith and trust. Do you believe that God is only working for your benefit? Do you think that the circumstances and events of life are meant for your benefit? These are difficult questions that we must face. When we face them honestly and genuinely we can begin to worship God in the Liturgy.

What does the Liturgy mean to you?

BECOMING AN ADULT CHILD OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

I have found that one of the most important aspects of becoming an Adult Child of the Heavenly Father is to truly “TRUST” Him to never withhold His love for me. It means that I have to give up thinking of the Heavenly Father either as a “rewarder” or “punisher” and certainly not as a RULE MAKER. We have to come to the realization that He truly loves us and only wants what is best for us and then attempt to live the way that He revealed to us through the Person of Jesus. To become an Adult Child you have to internalize the way of living that allows you to become all that you can possibly become. You have to also believe that this does not happen when all you do is keep the “rules” that can merit either reward or punishment.

Life is truly not just about rewards or punishments. Its about “BECOMING” who I was created to be. It is believing God has made us His temples so that we might, in some small way, make His Kingdom real in the here and now. In order to do this, we have to be adults and intentionally live like Jesus lived in order to make God present. All we read about Jesus is that people

recognized that He was a God-fearing man who also manifested His love for His ABBA, Daddy. The way that Jesus used the word *abba* shows us that Jesus had a very intimate relationship with his Father, not stoic or merely positional. It is what a loving father has with his son and the son who lives securely and certainly comfortably in that love.

If I’m afraid that my Heavenly Father is only attempting to catch me making mistakes and breaking rules, I can never really think of Him as ABBA - I can never rest assured of His love. So, I have to learn how to be an Adult Child in my relationship with Him. That signals spiritual growth. ***Fear makes love impossible.*** An

Adult Child only wants to freely return the Father’s love because he/she feels the Father’s love.

I sincerely hope that some of my musings on this topic will stimulate thought and reflection in my readers. I truly believe that this can be a key to real spiritual growth and become a true foundation for a loving and caring relationship between us and God. Do you have any thoughts about this? If so, please share them with me.



Schedule of Services

Sunday, October 4 - 18th Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 1
10:00 AM - 51st Wedding Anniversary of Leo & Mary LaDouceur

19h WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - Tone 2

Monday, October 5 - Charitina, Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Tuesday, October 6 - Thomas, Apostle
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday, October 7 - Sergius & Bacchus, Martyrs
No Service Scheduled

Thursday, October 8 - Pelagia, Venerable
No Service Scheduled

Friday, October 9 - James Alpheus, Apostle
No Service Scheduled

Saturday, October 10 - Eulampius & Eulampia, Martyrs
No Service Scheduled

Sunday, October 11 - 19th Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 2
10:00 AM - Special Intention

(Continued from page 5 - Living The New Life)
roots sufficiently so that the first strong breeze doesn't blow it away. A challenge: spend just ten minutes at the beginning of each of the next 21 days practicing the method of prayer that I will begin sharing with you.

Throughout these 21 days, I would invite you to reflect upon and take note of all the ways beginning your day with prayer has changed you and your life. Ask yourself: Are my days different? Has my new habit of prayer changed, in any way, the way I think about and treat others? In what ways has beginning each day with prayer improved my life?

Our choices are the foundation of our lives. Every day we make dozens of decisions, some of them large and some of them small. When was the last time you invited God into the decisions of your life? This can be done by simply asking: **God, what do you think I should do?**



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Rev. Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Pastor

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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

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

BECOMING A HEALING PRESENCE



To be a healing presence to others, I have to become a good listener. Listening is love delivered. This statement is axiomatic in family life and when visiting a patient in the hospital. Perhaps it is even more so during serious discussions about becoming a healing presence for others.

Becoming a truly healing presence for others requires attentiveness to the needs of others, especially those who live and work closely with us.

What is active listening? Active listening is being attentive to the basic meaning and the feelings in a statement made by another. Active listening absorbs the meaning and feelings behind the other's words and demonstrates, to the satisfaction of the other, that

we actually heard what was said. Our response is usually a short declarative sentence. This means that we cannot be thinking about how we will respond when the other person is speaking. We have to be able to say to ourselves that we "understand" what the person is saying.

Active listening is not judgmental or critical or patronizing or advice-giving. Active listening does not try to fix problems. It is simply being fully present to the other as the other speaks.

Active listening, at its best, doesn't ask many questions. While some questions for clarification are okay, questions can typically be a way of controlling the conversation and the other person. When I ask a question, I put the other person in the position of having to either answer or ignore my question. If we aren't careful, questions easily slip into interrogation. Adolescents often hate questions precisely because they sniff out the power differential between the questioner and the person being questioned.

Active listening to another when the other wants to be heard is an act of love. While we need to express our opinion honestly and candidly, we must try, if we want to be a healing presence, to do this constructively. This is done by listening first. That's often the rub. Many of us simply don't want to, or can't, listen first. That can sink our relational Titanic.

Why should we want to actively listen to others? Because we want to be a healing presence to them. We choose to live this way regardless of the fact that others may not actively listen to us. Being a healing presence makes God present, even if the other may not totally comprehend His presence.

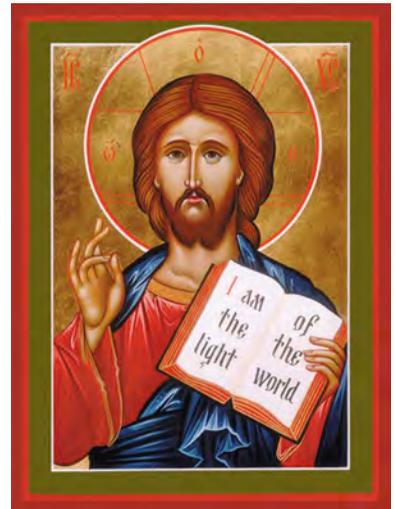
SOMETHING MORE ABOUT SACRED SCRIPTURE

I know that this article may be difficult to truly understand. I'm trying to present the idea of "divine" revelation. It is not an easy idea to accept since divine revelation does not necessarily include "historical truth." Humans want all that is presented to be "historically accurate."

As I suggested in my sermon last week, there are three different "stories" presented with regard to how Jesus called His first apostles/disciples. One would think that there should be only one story. What must be taken into consideration is the "context/situation" in which these accounts were presented. They attempted to encourage people to believe in Jesus Christ and His teachings. They were presented as a means of bringing others to the belief that Jesus was an exceptional man who seemed to be very connected to Yahweh-God.

I know that people would like these documents, which are truly a foundation of our faith, to be "historically" correct. They were never meant to be such documents. We must try to glean what their true meaning is. All we know is that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John attempted to record those things that might help others believe that He, Jesus, was the Messiah. As they spread the stories about Jesus to others beyond the Jewish community, they wanted people to believe that the what He taught and how He lived was a way that could bring them not only true internal peace but also provide them with the true meaning of life.

When you think about it, the teachings of Jesus centered around the idea that you cannot have a loving relationship with God if you don't have loving relationships with your fellow humans. This is the challenge! Love your neighbor as yourself. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. **Base your human relationships on how you would like to be treated rather than how others treat**



you. This, I believe, is one of the great insights of the Christian message. It encourages us to live according our beliefs and not on how others treat us or respond to us. When you think about the "Jesus Story" you see that is exactly what he espoused and lived.

GOVERN YOUR LIFE on your beliefs and not on the behaviors of others. Live an AUTHENTIC LIFE. I believe this, SO I LIVE THIS.

I know, this is easier said than done. That is the challenge - a challenge that can truly bring spiritual growth in the likeness of Jesus.



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНИЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, STL, Ph.D.
Vol. 67 No 39 18th Weekend After Pentecost October 3-, 2020

SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND INNER HEALING

In this article I have stressed that God does not want us to be someone we are not. He only wants us to discover who He intended us to be when He created us. He wants us to be all that we can be. He provides help and strength with His grace to those who desire to be “all that they can be. Again and again He honors the free will that He has given. He continues to call us to go beyond ourselves but He doesn’t second-guess us. He has given us “FREE WILL” and, in all instances, He respects our free choices and decisions. The relationship that He offers us is a LOVING RELATIONSHIP. He only calls us to enter into a loving relationship with Him. He is also very patient!

He does not “force” us to have a relationship with Him, He only hopes that we will recognize His great love for us and, therefore, want to do everything in our power to have a relationship with Him.

I think that the one thing most humans have a problem with is that God does not force them into anything. He does not want the “love of robots.” He wants the return of love from “free human beings” who chose to return His love.



This, of course, goes against the basic thought of Western Christianity, especially after the Reformation. Western thought is that God only wants adherence to laws. Unfortunately this goes against the idea that He is a LOVING GOD. A loving God, according to Eastern Spirituality, takes the chance of giving humans FREE

WILL so that they can freely and voluntarily return His love.

Where do you stand in this debate? Do you believe that God has given us “FREE WILL” so that He than can “oblige” us to return His love? Think about it. That makes God more human than God. Are you willing to freely return His love for you?

A God Who Cries For US

Making his rounds in a local hospital, a chaplain encountered a man who had sustained minor injuries in an automobile accident. Although his injuries were not life-threatening, those of his wife and small child were more serious. The chaplain encouraged the man to have faith and trust in God to which the man angrily replied, "why should I?" "Look at what God has done to my wife and child," he continued, "how can I have faith in a God who does things like that."

The chaplain then told the man about a particular occasion when Jesus was passing through a strange town and came across a funeral procession of a young man. Jesus didn't know the young man or anyone in his family, but He was moved with pity when He saw the crying mother. "Imagine," the chaplain said, "the Lord

Himself was so moved by pity that He actually cried with the widow." Jesus then stopped the procession and raised the young man from the dead and gave him back to his mother. (Luke 7:11-16)

The chaplain concluded by asking the man if he really thought that a God who loves us so much that He actually cries for us is capable of causing bad things to happen to us. The same God who cries for us – and who died for us – will never abandon us in our most critical time of need.

As the chaplain was leaving the man's room, the doctor entered and told the man that his wife and child would be fine. From out in the hallway, the chaplain overheard the man say, "thank You, Jesus."