

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of Christ as the Sower

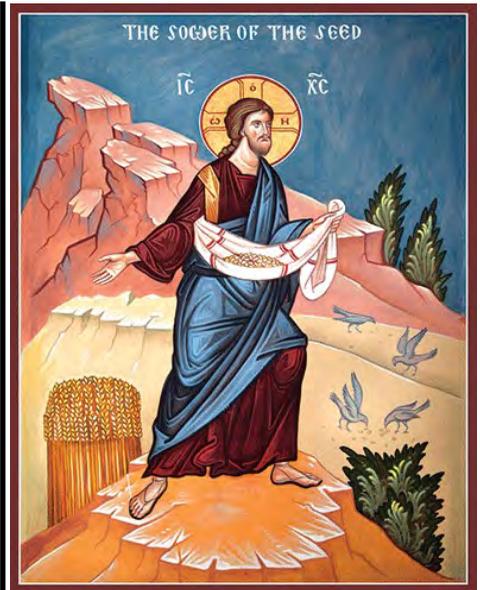
A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this 20th weekend after Pentecost, our readings are taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians and Luke's Gospel. In Paul's letter, he again presents, as he does in other letters, his defense of his authority and doctrine. Because he originally was someone who persecuted the followers of Jesus, he had to present reasons to those to whom he preached that he became a true follower of Jesus. He states: *I assure you, brothers, the gospel I proclaimed to you is no mere human invention.... I came by revelation from Jesus Christ.*

His defense of his authority was partly necessitated because he moved beyond just repeating the teachings of Jesus and shared with people his interpretation of Jesus' teachings. Further, he did something that none of the other apostles had done, he preached to the Gentiles - non-Jews. It must be remembered that the Apostle who were directly called by Jesus thought that their mission was to reform the way that Jews practiced Judaism. Paul saw, through the movement of the Holy Spirit, that the message was for all humankind.

Today's gospel passage shares Jesus' parable of the "sower". While Jesus shared the parable with those who came to hear Him preach, He did not share the meaning of the parable with them. He only shared the meaning of the parable with His disciples, saying that to them the *mysteries of the reign of God have been confided*. Why? Because they were called to be the teachers of God's revelation.

The "seed" that the sower sowed is meant to represent the "word of God". Where the



falls represents the condition of the heart of those who hear he word: (1) **footpath**: people who hear the word but allow the devil to take the word out of heir hearts; (2) **rocky ground**: people who hear the word but don't try to understand it; (3) **briers**: people who allows the cares and things of life to stifle progress; and (4) **good soil**: people who hear the word in a spirit of openness, retain it and bear fruit through perseverance.

Each of us must ask: what is the soil of my heart and mind like? Am I prepared and open to hearing God's word and allow it to grow within my heart? How we live dictates what type of soil is in our hearts and minds.

THOUGHTS ON GENESIS

Beginning with the serpent, human history has been the story of the cosmic and eternal struggle of good against evil, of light against darkness. The serpent's seed (evil men) will strive against the woman's seed (good men), and the struggle will be unrelenting. The mutual incompatibility and hostility between good and evil has been established by God Himself as part of His curse on the serpent, His hostility to disorder and evil. The text here reveals that the struggle will result in victory for humanity over the serpent, and for good over evil, for though the serpent will strike at the person's heel, the woman's seed will strike at his head, crushing him and bringing an end to evil.

Moving from the sacred mythology of the text to lived spiritual experience and Christian theology, one may ask what force was responsible in this world for bringing such disorder. The answer, of course, is Satan. And what force was responsible for vanquishing Satan and restoring peace and order to the cosmos? Christ. We may therefore accept this verse as a *protoevangelium*, a first preaching of the Gospel. if interpreted through the hindsight of application. God was not here prophesying or predicting Christ's coming but promising the final victory of good over evil and peace over chaos. We who live in the light of Christ's coming know how this final victory came about.

There are issues of historicity when it comes to Adam and Eve. This particular



commentary contends that the early chapters of the book of Genesis should be read in their cultural context, as ancient Near Eastern literature - namely mythologically. We resist the facile equation of “true” with “historically true according to the canons and standards of modern historical writing.” We therefore receive the stories as their original readers would have received them, as archetypal stories about mankind. In Genesis 2, *adam* refers to the archetypal man (just as in the first chapter *adam* referred to mankind) and the creation of the *adam's ishah* refers to the creation of all women everywhere.

Think about this!

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON EASTERN CATHOLIC CHURCHES

Question: How do Eastern Catholics reconcile their teachings with those of the Roman Catholic Church?

First of all, to be Catholic doesn't mean to be Roman Catholic. The word catholic represent the universal faith just as orthodox means true faith. The interpretation that the Eastern Churches put on what we call universal-orthodox faith is just as legitimate as the interpretations of the Western Church. What varies is in the expression of the faith and in the theological approach. Among the notable differences are the theology of marriage; the understanding of Mary, the Mother of God; the understanding of original sin, Purgatory and so on. There are also differences in practices between the Roman and Greek Churches.

The Eastern Churches teaching on marriage is quite different. This Sacrament, or Mystery, is called in the Byzantine Church the Mystery of Holy Crowning. Sacramental marriage takes place when the priest (only a priest can perform this sacrament) places crowns on the heads of those to be married and then blesses them. Vows are not the "sign" of the sacrament. In the Western Church the bride and groom are the ministers of the sacrament and the priest or deacon are only witnesses. In the Eastern Church the priest, who represents Christ, is the minister of the sacrament.

Further, sacramental marriage in the Eastern Church represents the groom and brides "faith" and "belief" that God has chosen to call them together as husband and wife. It is not the choice alone of the groom and bride.

Also, the sacrament of marriage represents the presence of Christ in the LOVE that is shared by the man and woman. God is love. Therefore, the love that draws husband and wife together is none other than God's own Spirit working in their lives.

Marriage is not seen as a "juridical" act. It is seen as a "faith" act. The Eastern Church believes that faith



is a much stronger force bringing man and woman together than the "personal choice" of husband and wife as expressed in vows.

Think about it. If a couple believe that God has chosen them for each other, can there be any stronger bond? Of course, it requires that the two persons entering into marriage truly embrace such a faith.

One aspect of the differences we see between East and West is the result of the cultures in which the Church developed. The West is more about laws than faith.

St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



CONDOLENCES

I would, on behalf of the Parish Family, express our sincere condolences to Patti and Bob Krokosky at the death of Patti's mon, SHIRLEY.

MAY HER MEMORY BE ETERNAL

Вічна пам'ять

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

In order to maintain transparency in my ministry and because some already know, I am currently receiving radiation treatment for "high risk" prostate cancer. I share this not because I desire sympathy but that all might have the same level of information about their pastor. In saying this I would, however, kindly ask for your prayers. *Thank you.*

VIRTUAL ADULT DISCUSSION

Beginning in November, after the beginning of St. Philip's Fast, the three Deacons in the Detroit Deanery will be conducting Virtual or Online Adult Discussions based on articles about Eastern Religious Subjects which will be distributed before the discussion. Further information will be coming soon. Sessions will be held on weekday evenings around 8 PM and will limited to a certain timeframe. *More to come.*

LIVING THE NEW LIFE

Whether we are at the advanced or a beginner level, the Prayer Process meets us there and leads us gently, step-by-step, to become all God created us to be. If on a particular day we are feeling dry and discouraged, it meets us where we are and leads us to a more hopeful place. If we are feeling elated and encouraged, it meets us there and teaches us to use these gifts for good. It expands or contracts to meet us where we are with what we need. Indeed A monk who has spent fifty years dedicated to prayer in a monastery could practice the Prayer Process and have a powerful experience, while someone who has never prayed in his or her life could engage the Prayer Process and have an equally powerful experience.



The Prayer Process is infinitely expandable and contractible. If you went away on a retreat, you could spend hours praying or journaling your way through the process, looking not just at the past 24 hours, but at the past year - or even your whole life.

For example, (Continued on page 8)

HOW TO PERSONALLY EXPERIENCE THE DIVINE LITURGY

In order to personally experience the Divine Liturgy, a person has to, first of all, recall that what takes place is the intersection of “heaven” and “earth.” This means that we have to consider the very structure of the church building. The more that we think about this, the more that the Liturgy begins to impact our lives. The church building is not just a building. It is meant to be a representation of heaven and earth.

The vestibule represents the outside world. The nave, that is the area where participants stand, kneel and sit, represents the area of faith. All the icons that surround people are meant to remind us that we are talking about the dimension of faith.

The area behind the iconostasis, which is raised three steps above the floor of the nave, represents the world to come - the dimension where God resides. The iconostasis represents the barrier that we must go through in order to become completely united with God in the next dimension. This barrier not only represents “personal transformation” (the icons represent persons who have changed their lives) but also death.

The Royal Doors represent the access point into the Kingdom to come. On the doors are the icons of the “Incarnation” (the event when Mary conceived Jesus through the announcement of the Archangel Gabriel) and the four evangelists (i.e., Matthew, Mark, Luke and John). The



mystery of God’s *enfleshment* or *incarnation* in the Person of Jesus opened humankind’s access to the Kingdom of God.

Further, the Gospels represent the proclamation of how one changes one’s life in order to access the Kingdom. We experience the opening of these doors to signal that if we are people of faith we have access to God’s Kingdom.

The Liturgy is the service, more than any others, which highlights how we have access to God’s Kingdom which is represented by the altar area.

The entire sanctuary in the Eastern Church is called the “altar” and the table, at the very center of the “altar” is called the “Throne of God.” When we begin to think about these things when we come to worship, it changes our very experience of the Liturgy. I will say more about that when I convey ideas about the very “ritual” that we experience when we attend the Divine Liturgy. *When in church think about this.*

BECOMING AN ADULT CHILD OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

This has been a thought-provoking article for me to write. Having been inspired with this thought one early morning, I have struggled to come up with some definite thought about what it truly means to be an Adult Child of the Heavenly Father. It just recently occurred to me that part of being an adult, I must truly give myself completely to understanding what my real beliefs are. I cannot just blindly accept formulae which are presented to me. I must think about, wrestle with the ideas and then come to some idea of what I truly believe the beliefs I have and what they mean for my life.

For example, if I believe that the purpose of this earthly existence is to have the opportunities to grow in my Likeness of Jesus and don't make that the purpose of my life, am I being an Adult? Being an adult means that I live according to my beliefs.

If I believe that I am a living temple of the Holy Spirit and don't do anything to make that real in my life, am I being an adult?

I also believe that being an Adult Child of the Heavenly Father means that I attempt to have constant contact

with Him much as we typically do if our earthly fathers are alive. The Heavenly Father IS ALIVE. Do I make a real effort to stay in touch with Him? If I don't, why don't I?

I suspect that if I don't maintain real contact with the Heavenly Father it is probably because I am afraid of Him and don't want to displease Him because He may punish me. That is not being an adult!

One of the things that we can do to help us understand what it means to be an Adult Child of the Heavenly Father is to ask ourselves: *Did my relationship with my earthly father change when I became an adult? and how did it change?* I suspect for some the relationship

didn't change and therefore it is hard to have an adult relationship with God.

This requires that we examine our "childhood" relationship with our earthly fathers. That will influence how we approach this with God.

Were we able to be honest with our earthly fathers when we became adults? Were we comfortable as an adult to have a different opinion from than our earthly fathers?

Think about this!



Schedule of Services

Sunday, October 18 - 20th Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 3
10:00 AM + Michajlo Zalopanyj; Wife Jaroslava

21st WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - Tone 4

Monday, October 19 - Josel, Prophet
No Service Scheduled

Tuesday, October 20 - Artemis, Great Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday, October 21 - Hilary the Great, Venerable
No Service Scheduled

Thursday, October 22 - Abercius, Bishop
No Service Scheduled

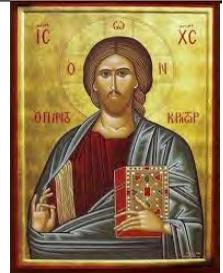
Friday, October 23 - James - Apostle, Brother of the Lord
No Service Scheduled

Saturday, October 24 - Arethas & Others, Martyrs
No Service Scheduled

Sunday, October 25 - 21st Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 4
10:00 AM + Julius Dicky; John & Janet Dicky

(Continued from page 5 - Living The New Life)

the first step in the process concerns **gratitude**. Imagine how long you could speak to God about everything that has ever happened in your life that you are grateful for. On the other hand, perhaps on a particular day you get distracted and don't pray at your regular time, and then the day gets away from you. Rather than going to bed without praying because you don't have the will or the energy to pray for 10 minutes, you can shorten the experience. Take just a minute. Yes, one single minute. You can still go through each of the seven steps (which I will share next week) but just speak one line to God about one thing at each step. Never let what you can't do interfere with what you can do. This ability to expand and contract is the think that's special about the Prayer Process. It is not elitist or exclusionary in any way. It serves all according to how open our hearts are to encountering God.



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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

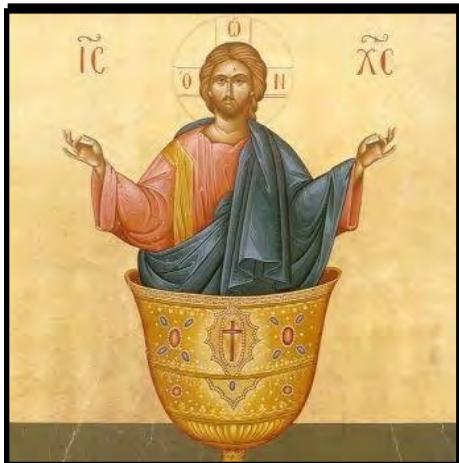
Rev Deacon Leonard Mier
313.584-6795

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



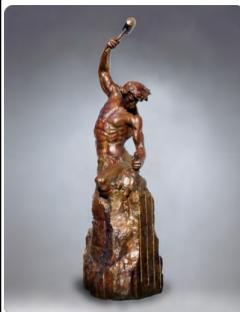
It must always be remembered that we don't control our interactions with other humans. We may think that we do but the truth of the matter is that God does. St Barsanuphius said: "Do not forget that without God there is no healing for anyone". There is *no* healing. None. None without God. Although this may seem to be common sense, St. Barsanuphius's words are profound.

We Westerners, especially in the United States, have an ingrained propensity to measure our lives by our achievements. We do some good and expect some reward. We fail at a project and expect a punishment. We think we earn our "grace," so to speak. We feel we have somehow behaved in a way

that pleases God and therefore we "stand in good stead." We performed well and will receive a pat on the head, a special favor with God, and eventually after a lifetime of Christian living, we "get" heaven.

But this performance mentality obstructs the possibility of being poor, needy, and loved simply because we are God's children. Grace is a free gift, not something we earn or deserve. Yes, we must do our part, but our part is to accept the gift and to say, like the Mother of God, "Be it done to me according to Your Word."

A statue called *self-Made Man* by Bobbie Carlyle eloquently portrays our plight. It renders a man in an upright block of stone. The bottom half of the block is untouched, a pillar of solid rock. The upper half of the statue represents a muscular and fierce man bending over the



stone with a chisel and mallet in his hand. He is chiseling the bottom half of his body from the uncut stone. He is diligently working to free himself from his prison of rock and become "himself". He is carving his character, carving his future. The man is

freeing his stone leg from the block of stone. For the Christian, a self-made man is truly an oxymoron.

The *self-Made Man* stands forever "making himself." In one sense, the statue vividly depicts the truth that we must work hard at our entire life, especially our spiritual life: we must work hard at being still and at constantly being aware of the presence of Christ.

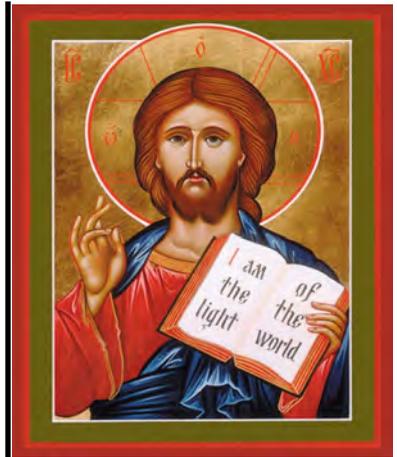
I wonder if this makes any sense to you, my readers. Love to hear your reactions!.

SOMETHING MORE ABOUT SACRED SCRIPTURE

There exists a close connection and communication between sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture. For both of them, flowing from the same divine wellspring, in a certain way merge into a unity and tend toward the same end. For Sacred Scripture is the word of God inasmuch as it is consigned to writing under the inspiration of the divine Spirit, while sacred tradition takes the word of God entrusted by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, and hands it on to their successors in its full purity, so that led by the light of the Spirit of truth, they may in proclaiming it preserve this word of God faithfully, explain it, and make it more widely known. Consequently it is not from Sacred Scripture alone that the church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed. Therefore both sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of loyalty and reverence.

Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God, committed to the Church (by this word we do not only mean the Roman Catholic Church but to the two apostolic churches, Catholic and Orthodox). Holding fast to this deposit the entire holy people united with their shepherds remain always steadfast in the teaching of the Apostles, in the common life, in the breaking of the bread and in prayers, so that holding to, practicing and professing the heritage of the faith, it becomes on the part of the bishops and faithful a single common effort.

But the task of authentically interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed on, has been entrusted exclusively to the living teaching office of the Church, whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ. This teaching office is not above the word of God, but serves it, teaching only what has been handed on, listening to it



devoutly, guarding it scrupulously and explaining it faithfully in accord with the divine commission and with the help of the Holy Spirit, it draws from this one deposit of faith everything which it presents for belief as divinely revealed.

It is clear, therefore, that sacred tradition, Sacred Scripture and the teaching authority of the Church, in accord with God's most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others and that all together and each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to salvation.



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, STL, Ph.D.
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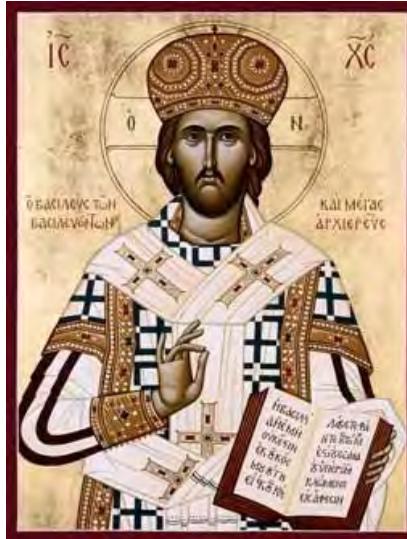
SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND INNER HEALING

In the last issue of this article, I raised the question of “dying to our ‘false selves.’” This identity process often happens at an early age - before six, psychologists tell us - and this is the reason it is so important that little children are loved and told in word and action that they are lovable. If we are convinced of our lovability in these formative years, we will be able to spend the rest of our lives discovering our true selves and using our potential to contribute to life. But, to the extent to which we were taught we are unlovable, we now have a false self that Jesus wants to - and needs to - heal.

Our false selves have also been nurtured in our adolescence and adulthood by certain brands of spirituality; not all spirituality leads to spiritual growth, and only that which is totally centered in Jesus can bring us into the truth and help us discover our true selves. Our fears, laziness and lack of courage can provide rather strong psychological barriers to our desire to discover the truth and to follow Jesus. Often we have been easily fooled by spiritualities that tell us we do not have to

find our true selves.

One of these spiritualities says that if we do something well, humility demands that we never do that thing. Thinking realistically, however, we know that if humility means acknowledging the truth about ourselves, it means that we acknowledge this capability, and that we also go further and accept the whole truth: that this quality does not originate in ourselves but rather is a gift from the Creator. He who created us in His image calls us to create, that is, to use our gifts and thereby give Him praise, acknowledging that the gift is from Him and giving Him thanks for it. With this attitude we can discover and free our



true selves, but - just as important - it is guaranteed that we will remain free, for we are keeping in proper relationship with Him Who is the author of all freedom.

Again it is important that we recognize and proclaim that all we are is a gift from God - a gift that He gives us so that His creation may be complete. We cannot and should not compare ourselves to others. Who we all are completes God's plan for His creation in the here and now.

Not the Seed at Fault, but Ourselves

The parable of the sower and the seed could also be called the parable of the fate of the word of God in human hearts. It is very simple, clear and easy to understand. There is no mistaking its meaning.

There is also no mistaking Jesus' love and concern for His people. It must have been very frustrating and disappointing for Him to go from village to village and bring them grace and salvation only to find that His words were falling on deaf ears and cold hearts.

It is with this pain and concern for souls that He tells this beautiful parable. This is also why He cried out many times at the end of His parables, "He who has ears to hear, let

him hear." Yet He continued on, patiently teaching, sowing the seed of truth and praying that it will take root and bring forth fruit.

When hearing this parable, do not these thoughts strike us: "How has the seed, the word of God, taken root in our souls? What is the fate of Christ's teaching in our hearts? What type of soil have we cultivated for God's word? Are our hearts cold, stony, filled with weeds and thorns?"

We cannot blame anyone but ourselves if the teachings of Jesus are not reflected in our lives. It is not the seed which is at fault, only ourselves.