

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of Healing the Gadarene Demoniacs (Luke 8:26-39)

A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this 22nd weekend after Pentecost, our readings are taken from Paul's Letter to the Galatians and Luke's Gospel. The section we hear from the Galatians is the conclusion of the letter and it presents Paul's witness that the CROSS is his true boast. The section from Luke's Gospel relates the cure of the demoniac at the country of Gerasenes.

Paul states: *May I never boast of anything but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.... All that matters is that one is created anew.*

The underlying theme in the two readings is, of course, being "created anew". Paul shares that belief in Jesus Christ and living in accord to His teachings, creates a person anew. The cure of the demoniac created him anew. Being created anew is accomplished when we embrace the teachings of Jesus and make every attempt to embrace His way of living.

Think about it! We are created incomplete as human beings and life is designed to help us to move toward completion relative to our personalities and lives. God has given us a free will and has infused in us the potential to grow in the likeness of Jesus - to grow in the likeness that He created to be. When we freely undertake the task of personal change and transformation, we are created anew.

This is, of course, the purpose of this earthly existence. God so designed human life that we take part in creating ourselves anew with His help (grace) as provided us by God's Holy Spirit Who is within us, calling us into existence and giving us the power to spiritually grow and personally change.

Know this to be true. This is what life is all about! Earthly life is given to us so that we



might have the opportunity to grow and change. Life is designed to provide us with a multitude of opportunities - that is challenges - which are uniquely designed to help us, in particular, to change. While other humans may have similar challenges, they are not the very same. The opportunities that life presents to us are unique to us as human beings - they are designed to help US grow.

God never forces us to change. He only presents the opportunities for us to freely choose to grow and change. It is up to us to cooperate with life.

THOUGHTS ON GENESIS

I was recently asked why I continue to present this commentary on Genesis. I present it because I am convinced that this book, a part of the Old Testament, has greatly influenced human thinking and that many take it as representing the history of humankind. If and when we accept this story as “history,” we truly distort our understanding of what it means to be a human and what the meaning and purpose of earthly life is. So I continue.

But one may ask, what about what historically occurred? What about the actual origins of our race according to the findings of the various sciences? What about evolution? I, for one, am happy to cheerfully confess my ignorance about the details and also my general disinterest in them. And I would be happy if some of our anthropologists confessed at least a tiny touch of tentativeness in some of their conclusions as well. When one looks at an artist’s rendition of one of our supposed pre-human ancestors, gazing into those soulful eyes, one would never imagine that one was actually looking at a piece of jawbone and a few teeth. One thing of Chesterton’s remarks on such theorists: “We speak of the patience of science, but in this department it would be truer to talk of the impatience of science. Owing to the difficulty of paucity of evidence the theorist is in far too much of a hurry.”

That said, theories of the development of Man from a pre-human hominid ancestors for our modern way



of understanding our biological origin, I am not here concerned to dispute. Accepting them at least for purposes of argument, I would like to offer a fairy tale of my own based on them, one possible scenario explaining our origins. One could label it as our modern myth. I cannot take much credit for it, for C.S. Lewis already described it in his *The Problem of Pain*.

In the next installment of this article, I will present Lewis’ fairy tale about the origins of man. Needless to say, what I would like to point out is that Genesis, because it is not a historical account of the creation of humankind, doesn’t necessarily indicate that evolution is not necessarily the solution either.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON EASTERN CATHOLIC CHURCHES

Question: Why can't the Eastern and Western Catholic Churches be the same in their practices?

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. Charlemagne imposed the Roman Rite on his subjects in central Europe. this was a great influence in the West, which the East continued to develop their own traditions.

The development of the Liturgy, and other religious practices, was a slow but continuous process for at least the first six hundred years of the Church. After that, the East was dealing with the Muslim occupation; changes in the Liturgy were very few after than event, although hymns used in monastic circles were placed in the Liturgy, causing it to become very long.

The Second Vatican Council has affirmed the validity and importance of the Eastern Catholic churches. St John Paul II referred to the Eastern Churches as the "other lung" of the church. for all these reasons, and many more, it's important that we *not* all do the same thing the same way. Rather, the faith is revealed in all its wonderful depth and mystery through the many and varied ways in which it is expressed.

As I shared in the last installment, the Byzantine Liturgy was greatly influenced by the Imperial Court



since to Christians God is the ruler and not the Emperor.

Further, the Church and her doctrines have been influence by Greek philosophy. The Church had no real language to be able to express belief that God is Three-In-One or that Jesus is God-and-Man. So she drew upon the ideas expressed in Greek philosophy.

Western philosophy and Eastern philosophy are quite different in many ways, partially due to the difference in "thinking" that we find between two different cultures.

More to follow!

St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



VIRTUAL ADULT DISCUSSION SESSIONS

The deacons have schedule four (4) Discussion Sessions before Christmas. They will all be held at 8:00 PM.

Thursday, November 12th

Thursday, December 3rd

Thursday, December 10th

Thursday, December 17th

Hopefully about a week before the Discussion Session you will receive via email an article to read. Discussion will be based on the article after there is a brief summary of the article by one of the deacons.

Since there must be a limitation placed on the number of participants involved due to software limitations, I would hope that, if you are interested, you go to St. Michael's website and register today

stmichaelarchangel.org

It is our hope that these discussion will promote the "thought" and "insights" that are truly necessary for spiritual growth.

Depending on the response that we receive, we will attempt to continue such discussion sessions during the coming year, especially during the Great Fast!

LIVING THE NEW LIFE

We live the NEW LIFE when we come to understand life as a sharing in the very LIFE of God. Once we can say that we truly believe that we are sharing in God's own life, can we conceive this human life as "new life."



It's a new life when we put aside all of our old, perhaps negative and false ideas about this earthly life. This requires, I believe, that we take time to "think about our life" and to "reflect on its true meaning and purpose."

I wonder how many of my readers have ever took the time to stop and ask themselves: *Why am I here? What is my life all about?*

I believe that to become a "spiritual person" I have to become a person who is willing to "think about" and "reflect upon" my life and its meaning. To become a spiritual person means to become a person who is serious about your spiritual growth - to become a person who truly wants to find their true self - to understand who they are in God's universe. You can't be frivolous about the things of your life. So a certain **(Continued on page 8)**

HOW TO PERSONALLY EXPERIENCE THE DIVINE LITURGY

One of the things that I have found is helpful to me to “personally experience the Divine Liturgy”, is to listen to the prayers, especially those proclaimed by the clergy, and then attempt to envision what the prayers are saying.

For example, the second prayer of the faithful has powerful images within it. It reads:

Again and again we fall down before You and beseech You... that You hear our prayer and cleanse our souls and bodies of every defilement of flesh and spirit. Grant that we may stand before Your holy altar without blame and condemnation.

Can you actually envision yourself falling down or standing before God? Since it is our tradition during the Great Fast (Lent) to make prostrations, we can envision ourselves doing this as we pray. We can also mentally picture ourselves standing in prayer all during our 40 day celebration of Easter. These are actions that we engage in within the context of worship. We can also mentally imagine them when prayers are offered that suggest these actions.

To truly experience the Divine Liturgy, we must use all of our senses, our imagination, our intelligence and our faith. Doing something like trying to attach images to the prayers we hear, allows us to fully enter into prayer.

There are, of course, a multitude of prayers that we use that have images in them. One prayer envisions us



bringing gifts and spiritual sacrifices to God and presenting them to Him. What gifts would you bring besides the bread and wine that we offer up?

Our Divine Liturgy is truly meant to be a very “sensual” experience, not just an “intellectual, abstract” experience. We have to be present to the ritual of the Liturgy besides the words. Think about the processions which express God coming in the Person of Jesus into our world to lead us back to God in the spiritual dimension. These processions are meant to remind us that God became man to lead us back to Him. They also can very clearly express the fact that “LIFE IS A JOURNEY” of personal change since the procession goes through the opening of the Iconostasis which contains images of persons who underwent human change and transformation.

This kind of approach to the Liturgy, I believe, makes it even a much richer experience and gives us insight into its meaning and purpose.

BECOMING AN ADULT CHILD OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

God in His great Wisdom and Love, calls us to be “active” participants in our relationship with Him. This requires us, I believe, to be adults. If we **fear** Him, we cannot truly **love** Him. Now we can stand in **awe** before Him and with Him. We cannot fear Him.

Do you know or any relationship where when one person “fears” the other that it is a healthy relationship? I think not.

In truly genuine and adult relationships, one person desires to make known the other person to others. A loving relationship requires us to want to share the relationship with others. True love always wants to share the existing love with others.

So, to have a loving, adult relationship with God means that I desire to have others know Him as I do, that is if I have an adult, genuine relationship with Him. I know that many may ask, *How can I have an Adult relationship with God, who is incomprehensible, invisible and even someone beyond my imagination?*

He, God, Himself made it possible by sharing His life with us, becoming incarnate as a human, and making us the temple of His very Spirit. These are

not just “pious” words. They express the reality of who we are in relation to God. He is, in my estimation, first and foremost a Father. What does it mean to be a father? It means wanting the best for our children, helping them to grow and not making them dependent totally on me but, rather, partners with

me on the journey of life. I truly think that it means that I begin to look at God in a much different way than I perhaps did as a child. Children look at their earthly parents in a different way when they become adults. Is it not possible to do the same with God?

I can’t imagine God wanting to be in a true relationship with some person who only fears Him. How can that be a true relationship?

Now being in an adult relationship with God means that I strive to bring Him honor and praise, much as I should do with my earthly father. As an adult, I have only wanted to bring honor and respect to my earthly father because I bear His name and share his life. How do I do that? By becoming a truly genuine, human being who lives a decent and genuine life.

Think about how you can bring praise and honor to our Heavenly Father!



Schedule of Services

Sunday, November 1 - 22nd Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 5
10:00 AM – Intentions of Deacon Leonard Mier, Jr
+ Eileen Vaseloff; Daughter Rene

23rd WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - Tone 6

Monday, November 2 - Akindynos & Others, Martyrs
No Service Scheduled

Tuesday, November 3 - Acepimas & Others, Martyrs
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday, November 4 - Joannicius, Venerable
No Service Scheduled

Thursday, November 5 - Galaction & Episteme, Martyrs
No Service Scheduled

Friday, November 6 - Paul the Confessor, Archbishop
No Service Scheduled

Saturday, November 7 - 33 Martyrs of Melitene
No Service Scheduled

Sunday, November 8 - 23rd Weekend after Pentecost - Tone
10:00 AM – John & Ann Kushner; John & Janet Dicky

(Continued from page 5 - Living The New Life)

amount of seriousness must pervade your life. It doesn't mean, however, that you can't laugh and have fun. It means that you find time to be serious since this current earthly life is a stepping stone to your next life. It means you understand the true significance of this earthly life.

Common sense would seem to indicate that how I live this earthly life must have some significance for the life to come. So it behooves us to use the opportunities of this life to prepare us for the life that continues after this life.

To undertake this task doesn't mean to become pessimistic about this life but, rather, to seize each and every moment of this life as a precious gift, given to us by the Heavenly Father out of love. It does mean to be grateful and at least give some serious thought to the meaning and purpose of this life.



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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



I ended the last installment of this article by referencing a survey made of missionaries who returned from missionary work. The list included such items as “couldn’t learn the language” and “found the living conditions to be unsatisfactory.” The number one reason given, by far, was “the presence of other Christian missionaries.” We understand what is being said in that research. The surveyed missionaries came back because they couldn’t live in a foreign country with other Christian missionaries.

That is an astounding finding. The returning surveyed missionaries said, in effect, that the greatest barrier to spreading Christ’s Word was the presence of their fellow Christian missionaries. We

have much to learn from this study because the conclusions have a generalized application. Perhaps one of the great hindrances to the spread of the Christian faith today is our own impact on our fellow Christian believers and then on others who see us. The effect cascades onto others who see it all. That thought can give us pause.

We can better learn to become a healing presence as we learn to open ourselves more to the music of the Bridegroom and to ask for more grace. “Lord, I surrender myself to You to do with me as You will. Grant that I may become a healing presence to others.

Being a healing presence doesn’t mean that I attempt to have others embrace the dogmas and doctrines that I hold as true and sacred. I can be a healing presence to others whether or not they agree with my “brand of Christianity.” To be a healing presence means that I live according to my beliefs but do not force others to accept my beliefs.

Metropolitan Kallistos Ware talks about the sacrament of the present moment. He explains that the present moment is the point at which time touches eternity. What is also true is that the present moment is really the only moment we have! There is really no past or future that really exist.

It is fascinating that a number of Eastern Christian theologians choose the word *sacrament* when writing about the present moment. Our understanding of *sacrament* is a mystery, which is more than a sign but rather “something becoming what it is,” “a dynamic synthesis of symbol and fulfillment. This is why we have SEVEN MYSTERIES instead of SEVEN SACRAMENTS in our Church.

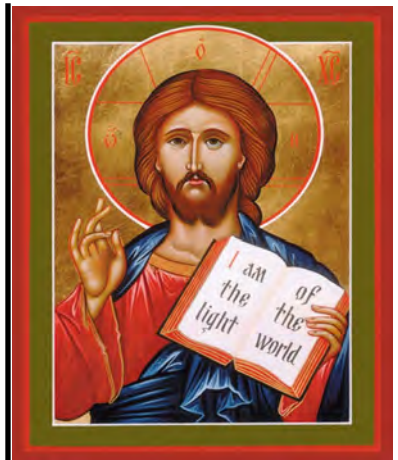
SOMETHING MORE ABOUT SACRED SCRIPTURE

For the correct understanding of what the sacred authors wanted to assert, due attention must be paid to the customary and characteristic styles of feeling, speaking and narrating which prevailed at the time of the sacred writers, and to the patterns men normally employed at that period in their everyday dealings with one another.

But since Holy Scripture must be read and interpreted in the same spirit in which it was written, no less serious attention must be given to the content and unity of the whole of Scripture if the meaning of the sacred texts is to be correctly worked out. The living tradition of the whole Church must be taken into account along with the harmony which exists between elements of the faith. It is the task of exegetes to work according to these rules toward a better understanding and explanation of the meaning of Sacred Scripture, so that through preparatory study the judgment of the church may mature. For all of what has been said about the way of interpreting Scripture, it is subject finally to the judgment of the church, which carries out the divine commission and ministry of guarding and interpreting the word of God.

In Sacred Scripture, therefore, while the truth and holiness of God always remains intact, the marvelous “condescension” of eternal wisdom is clearly shown, “that we may learn the gentle kindness of God, which words cannot express, and how far He has gone in adapting His language without thoughtful concern for our weak human nature.” For the words of God, expressed in human language, have been made like human discourse, just as the Word of the eternal Father, when He took to Himself the flesh of human weakness, was in every way made like men.

It has been my contention that Scripture is more valuable to me if I don't necessarily try to make sure



of the exact meaning of the passages that I read but, rather, allow them to inspire me to think about God and life. We have to believe that God's Spirit will guide us in using the Scriptures to spiritually grow. I truly believe that they are inspirational if we allow them to touch our minds and hearts. We can strive to discover the exact meaning of a passage in Scripture and miss being inspired by the passage.

Like all human sacred writings, they are meant to help us get in touch with the spiritual realm - the spiritual dimension of creation. That's why they are so valuable and worthwhile.



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, STL, Ph.D.
Vol. 67 No 43 22nd Weekend After Pentecost October 31-November 1, 2020

SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND INNER HEALING

As I ended the last installment of this article, I suggested that through inner healing Jesus discovers our true selves and that this is a joyous experience for the false self dies. It is when people see Christians putting to death their true selves that “death to self” becomes repugnant to them. And it should, under these circumstances. For when Christians put their true selves to death, while many of them are motivated by the highest goals, they are not following the teachings of Jesus. Their lives may be very religious, but they are not living the way of spiritual growth, the unique view of life Jesus taught and lived.

All through the ages, the great saints who have gone before us, our spiritual parents, have witnessed to the biblical truth that God has made us to give Him praise by being the persons we are. As St Irenaeus said, “The glory of God is a human being fully alive”.

Again, we see the difference between that to which Jesus calls us and that to which totally humanistic self-realization calls us. Inner healing and spiritual growth are not “self-realization: they are not self finding self, for that is an impossibility. Inner healing is Jesus finding our true selves; it is Jesus-centered.



Paul said it this way: “Make sure that no one traps you and deprives you of your freedom through some secondhand, empty, rational philosophy based on the principles of this world instead of

on Christ. In His body lives the fullness of divinity, and in Him you too find your own fulfillment, in the One Who is head of every Sovereignty and Power. Therefore, we do not want to follow, for example, psychology alone; rather, we want to follow Christ, Who has the divine nature to give to us, Who can deal with every power over our lives.

***Hopefully these thoughts will
provoke some thought!***

Physicians Who Work for Free

On November 1st, we celebrate the feast of two remarkable brothers who lived during the early years of the Christian Church. Cosmas and Damian were born of wealthy parents in Asia Minor who gave their sons the best education in the Roman Empire.

They were interested in medicine and became physicians at an early age. During this same time, the two brothers also became Christians. Their unique combination of medicine and prayer attracted the attention of many. Through their commitment to Christ they endeavored to become healers not only of the body, but of the soul as well. Consequently, their fame spread and they soon developed a reputation as being miracle-workers who could heal with an herb as well as with a prayer.

About this same time, the brothers made a

most unique pledge: they pledged not to take any money for their services. They healed thousands of people from diseases of body and soul and never accepted anything for their efforts. Their reputation spread even more rapidly as they became known as “unmercenaries” – someone who does not expect payment of any kind in return for services rendered.

In a sense, each of us can become unmercenaries in the same spirit as were Saints Cosmas and Damian. Each of us can freely give something of ourselves without expecting anything in return. Perhaps we can give our time to a person in need without expecting an equal favor in return. Perhaps we can freely give advice without being offended if it is not followed. Or, perhaps we can give the gift of forgiveness without receiving an apology in return.