

SUNDAY OF ZACCHAEUS



Icon of Zacchaeus in the Sycamore Tree

A REFLECTION ON OUR REAINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this weekend we begin our preparation for the Great Fast. We remember the encounter of Jesus with the chief tax collector of Rome, Zacchaeus. He was, of course, a Jew. He had sided with Rome in its total subjugation of the land of Israel.

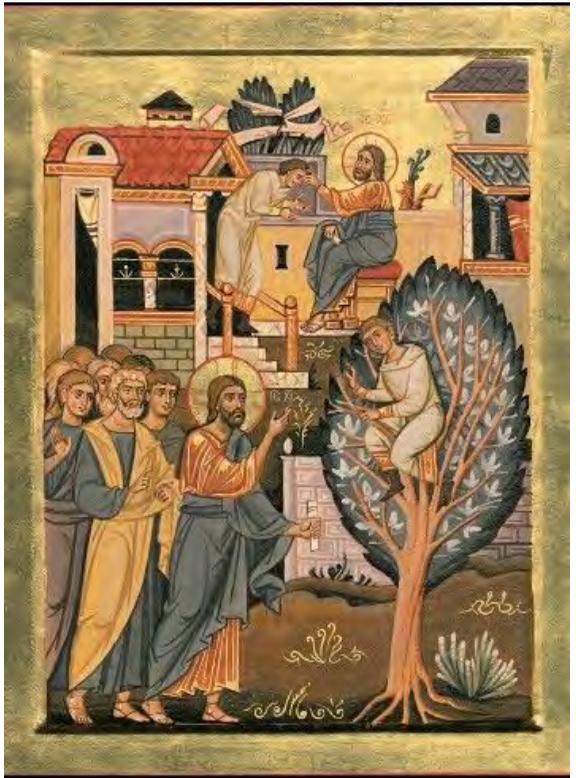
It is an interesting encounter. Zacchaeus, because he was a short man in stature, decided to climb a tree in order to see Jesus. He heard a lot about Him. He wanted to know what kind of man He really was.

Jesus comes upon Him and calls Him down in order to have a real encounter with him. He comes down and encounters a charismatic man who overwhelms him. He no longer has any doubts about Who Jesus is.

So this first weekend of the pre-lent sequence challenges us to have no real reservation who Christ Jesus is and, rather, to embrace a total commitment to Him as our Savior and Lord.

Now what does this mean to us who are living more than 2,000 years after Jesus Christ? How do we embrace Him as Savior and Lord?

This is the challenge we face. Can anyone tell me that they have found someone who has clearly told them about the meaning and purpose of human life? As I survey all the other religions, there are none that address this very pertinent issue. Only Christianity, in my estimation truly addresses this issue. Christianity



presents us, I believe, with a clear understanding of the meaning of life. We are here to develop the innate abilities our Creator has given us and to understand life. It is not a mystery. We are here to grow in our ability to see ourselves as not only spiritual but also physical beings who have one major task: to figure this all out. We also believe that God Himself is willing to help us figure this all out because He loves us - He cannot not help to unconditionally love that which He has created in His Image and Likeness. It is my hope that those who read this will come to the same conclusion.

POST THEOPHANY THOUGHTS

As we are in this post-Theophany period I wonder what my readers really think this major feast was all about? We call it a “theophany” or a “manifestation” of God. So how was our celebration of this feast truly a manifestation of God to you?

I think one of the interesting things about Jesus was that He kept all the rules of His faith (Judaism) and yet found a real way to express His disagreement in the way that His faith was practiced by many. He saw the inconsistencies that existed in His faith, but He did not reject His faith and did not, really, intend to start a new religion. The establishment of Christianity as a religion was left up to Paul and the other Apostles.

Jesus saw that in His faith there was much hypocrisy and that His faith, as practiced by many, seemed only to center on keeping rules. He tried very desperately, I believe, to address this issue by offering a simplified idea about how to live. He followed His cousin John, the Baptizer, by telling people that they had to “change” their hearts and minds because the Kingdom of God was at hand. He preached total “conversion” of mind and heart. This meant to: no longer “hate” others who didn’t think or live like you; love your enemies; forgive others who may have offended you; not judge others; and respect all others and treat them as siblings. He shared that all other human beings are a part



of the same human family and, therefore must be accepted with respect.

Jesus came to be baptized by John in order to support the movement that John had initiated. The act of Baptism, just as it is in our Church, symbolized that He embraced the way of living that John preached. It was an act of initiation into “reformed Judaism” - a Judaism which was more open and focused on living as one of Yahweh’s (God’s) children.

It is interesting to note that both John and Jesus are killed because of their honesty and the reformed way of living they preached. It is interesting to note that all those who first followed Jesus were also martyred because humans seem to find it difficult to accept others who may think and live in a different way.

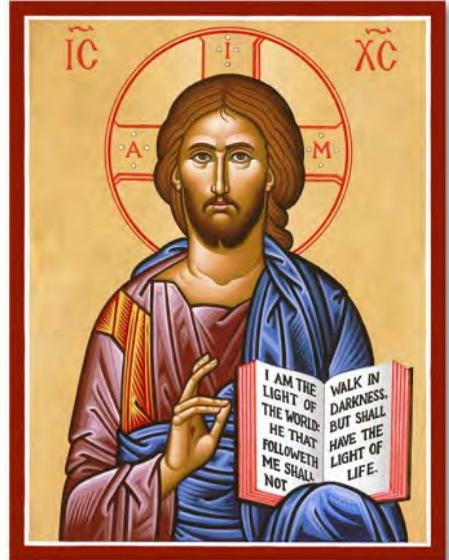
We find that this still seems to be true and that humans have not learned much over the centuries. What is more discouraging is that many who promote hate of others also call themselves Christians.

THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

The teaching of Kavasilas on the sacraments is very different from that which was shaped by scholastic (Western) theology, which defined them (i.e., sacraments) as the visible rites which communicate invisible divine grace, and fixed their number as seven.

Kavasilas regards the eucharist as the central sacrament which re-presents the economy of the Savior; (the **Economy of the Savior**, also called the **Divine Economy**, is that part of divine revelation that deals with God's creation and management of the world, particularly his plan of **salvation** accomplished through the Church). The Eucharist makes the economy of the Savior actively present once again in each specific place and time, and, moreover, also makes actively present the baptism and chrismation which introduce man to the eucharist. From the Eucharist flows a host of sacred rites which embrace the whole of life and all the dimensions of human existence in the world. A new mode of life is thus created together with a new organization of the relationships of human beings with each other, with God and with the world, a new organization in Christ of the communion of mankind with the world. The new life which Christ bestows is call by Kavasilas sacramental life. And those signs of the place and time within which the divine life encounters human life and transforms it - the very fact of the transformation and the meeting as well as the acts, that is, the rites or procedures within which the transformation is realized - he calls sacraments.

By contrast, according to the scholastics there is an external element in the sacraments



which is the visible sign, and distinct from this there is the essence of the sacrament, which is the invisible divine grace. For Kavasilas and for the Eastern patristic tradition in general this separation does not exist. In baptism the priest first consecrates the water, and in this consecrated water the person is baptized. In the divine eucharist the bread and wine become truly and in actuality the body and blood of Christ. In chrismation the believer is anointed with consecrated oil. The body of man and man himself, cannot be comprehended except in organic union with the rest of creation.

St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



VIRTUAL ADULT DISCUSSION SESSIONS

Thursday January 21st - 8:00 PM

Metanoia - The Work of the Fast

Thursday February 4th - 8:00 PM

Humility - An Essential Virtue

Thursday February 18th - 8:00 PM

Return from Exile - An Attitude of Mind

Thursday March 4th - 8:00 PM

The Meaning of the Cross

Thursday March 18th - 8:00 PM

The Forgiveness of Sins

We have yet to decide if there will be at least one or two sessions after The Great Day, Easter. If you have not already registered to participate in these discussions, simply go to

<http://stmichaelarchangel.org/>

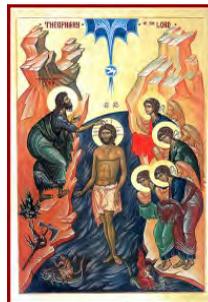
and click on Adult Discussion Group and register. You do not need to attend each and every session but you have to be registered so that you can be admitted to the Group. This is for security reasons. Non-registrants will not be admitted to the discussions.

LENTEN SERVICES

We know we will live-stream our Lenten Services on Friday evenings at 7:00 PM.

LIVING THE NEW LIFE

Having just completed our celebration of the various *Theophanies* (Manifestations) of God to humankind through the Person Jesus, we are called to enter into a time of *personal change* or *personal transformation*.



If we believe that God's manifestations were meant to reveal to us the true meaning and purpose of this earthly existence, then we will make a true effort to engage in things that will help us to spiritually grow and *change our hearts and minds*. As I shared with many, we come into this world with ill-formed ideas about what life is all about. During our formative years we formulate many different ideas about what life is all about. Most commonly these are ill-conceived and do not pertain to personal growth. So the work of life becomes an effort to grow in our "likeness" of Jesus who was/is God's revelation to us about how to live this earthly life.

Like all things in creation, we must become involved in "CHANGE", a word that I know many find difficult to accept. Humans typically don't like the idea of change *(Continued on page 8)*

HOW TO PERSONALLY EXPERIENCE THE DIVINE LITURGY

As we experience the ANAPHORA of the Divine Liturgy, we need to keep in mind that the transformation of the very essence of the bread and wine is the WORK OF THE HOLY TRINITY. The Anaphora begins with an exhortation to “LET US LIFT UP OUR HEARTS”. So when you hear these words, it is very important that you consciously lift up your heart. You may have to convince yourself to do this but it is essential. The anaphora is the very core of our worship.

The prayer of the congregation after the next exhortation, which asks us to “give thanks to the Lord,” I think is very meaningful. The congregation is called upon to respond: “It is proper and just to worship the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Trinity one in substance and undivided”. This confirms our intent to worship our Triune God. We do this by joining with Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to worship the Father Who is the Giver of Life. The man Jesus Himself worshipped the Father under the influence and power of the Holy Spirit.

What follows this series of exhortations is the first Prayer to the Trinity. In this prayer we thank God for the Liturgy which facilitates our worship of our Triune God and leads us to praying the hymn which Scripture tells us the angels, especially the Cherubim and Seraphim, constantly sing before the Throne of God - that is



the HOLY, HOLY, HOLY. In that prayer there is the line: “Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord.” Of course that person is Jesus.

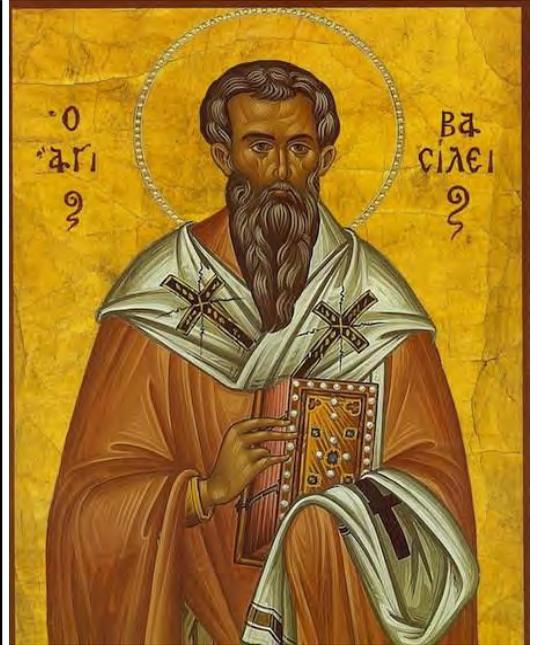
What immediately follows is our prayer to the Father: “With these blessed powers, O loving and kind Master (Father), we too cry out and say. This sets the stage for remembering the words of Jesus at the Last Supper.

It is critical to point out that in our Eastern Ritual, the change of the essence of the bread and wine does not take place when we remember the words of Jesus. Rather, the change takes place at the EPICLESIS which calls upon God’s Spirit to enact the change. So the process of transforming the essence of the bread and wine during the Liturgy is the work of the Trinity and not just Jesus. We are joined to their work by the Person of the Holy Spirit in and through the humanity of Jesus.

THOUGHTS ON GENESIS

When the woman conceived and gave birth, she said, “I have gotten a man with the help of Yahweh!” The utterance was not a theological reflection but an ecstatic cry of joy. This cry contains a wordplay, for the word **gotten** (Hebrew *qana*) sounds like the name **Cain** (Hebrew (*qayin*), even though there is no etymological link. Some have considered as odd the woman’s use of the term **a man** (Hebrew *ish*) to describe a newborn, for *ish* is related to the use of the narrator’s name “Life” for the woman - the woman’s name indicated that the race would find its origin in her, that she had a glorious destiny. The birth of the first baby meant that this destiny had begun with the help of God, that the first individual, the first *ish*, had now come into the world through procreation and that human history was beginning. The cry of joy was not just over the birth of the child but over a new beginning of the race.

In time she bore his brother **Abel**. The contrast between the two births is stark: for Abel’s birth there is no cry of joy; it is mentioned almost in passing. The name **Abel** possibly means “puff, breath, vapor, vanity.” If so, we may have here a foreshadowing of his future, which was indeed to prove ephemeral. The words of Psalm 144:4, “Man is like a breath, his days like a passing shadow,” would find fulfillment in him. We also learn that **Abel was a shepherd of flocks and Cain a tiller of the ground.**



At length the two brothers brought their respective offerings. The word for **offering** is the Hebrew *minchah*, which denotes an offering of tribute and loyalty; it is used in Genesis 32:13 to describe Jacob’s gift to Esau. A *minchah* was often a gain offering, but could be anything - Jacob’s *minchah* consisted of goats, rams, camels, cows, bulls and donkeys. Each brother brought a present from his own resources. Since Cain was a tiller of the ground, he brought an offering of the fruit of the ground. Since Abel was a shepherd, he brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions.

You’re encouraged to pick up your Bible and read Genesis

Schedule of Services

**Sunday, January 17th - Weekend of Zacchaeus - Live-Streamed
10:00 AM - Special Intention**

33RD WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - Tone 1

Monday, January 18 - Athanasius & Cyril , Archbishops
No Service Scheduled

Tuesday, January 19 - Macarius, Venerable
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday, January 20 - Euthymius the Great, Venerable
No Service Scheduled

Thursday, January 21 - Maximus the Confessor, Venerable
No Service Scheduled

Friday, January 22 - Timothy, Apostle, Anastasious Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Saturday, January 23 - Clement of Ancarya, Martyr
No Service Scheduled

**Sunday, January 24th - Weekend of the Publican & Pharisee - Live Streamed
10:00 AM - Special Intention**

(Continued from page 5 - Living The New Life)

and seem to resist it at all costs. Why, you might ask? Humans seem to be afraid of change, many times hanging onto old ways of thinking and living which are counterproductive. Why we humans think that we don't need to change is personally beyond me. As I view my life, I know that there are many ways that I need to change - discarding old ways of thinking and living which don't allow me to spiritually grow.

This all requires, however, that we honestly assess who we are and determine things that we need to change in order to become more like Jesus. Of course this may be the stumbling block. Many people don't believe they can become more like Jesus because He was also God. Our Church has clearly declared as a dogma of our faith, that Jesus was fully God and fully man and that how He lived as a man was not dictated by His Divine Nature.



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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
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313.624.9867

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

BECOMING A HEALING PRESENCE



St. John Climacus reminds us, “Just as bread is the most necessary of all foods, so the thought of death is the most essential of all works.” He adds a touch of sanity by saying that the person who does not repent longs for death as a way out of life.

So we remember death, but in no way seek death or look for deadly escapes from our God-given life. We remember death as a stimulus to live the present moment with great vigor, precisely because we are not dead yet.

Our life on earth is an experience of small deaths and resurrections. Every loss is a gift God gives us so He can give us more life. He can close a door to open other doors. We might lose our keys or a tooth or a computer hard drive

or some of our memory. We might lose loved ones through separation or death. Our reaction might be, “Ah, this is the beginning of the end.” A more truthful thought would be, “This is the beginning of the beginning.” It is. Every loss is the beginning of a new phase of our relationship with Christ, a fresh beginning toward our ultimate beginning - heaven.

The purpose of growing old is to prepare us to die. Not everyone gets the chance to grow old. The purpose of growing old isn't to get a hammock, have a large iced tea, and enjoy *la dolce vita*, the good life. No, no. We are here to live in Christ. That's what it is about. The grave leading to the door of a mystical new life is an opening. It is very difficult for us to understand, but we do the best we can.

The point is that we have a purpose on this planet until we die, regardless of our conditions of suffering. In our aging and suffering, we are an indefinable presence to others until our last breath.

St. John Climacus said, “the fathers assert that perfect love is sinless, and it seems to me that a perfect sense of death is free from fear.”

To become a “healing person” we must, first and foremost, embrace ambiguity. Embracing ambiguity challenges our need to understand and control reality. After all, we are rational creatures with a God-given intellect.

When we begin to embrace ambiguity we become less rigid, less black-and-white in our thinking. We become softer. We become more kind.

Hopefully this article is making some sense to my readers. Jesus was a “healing person”. We can become such a person if only we put our minds and hearts to it.

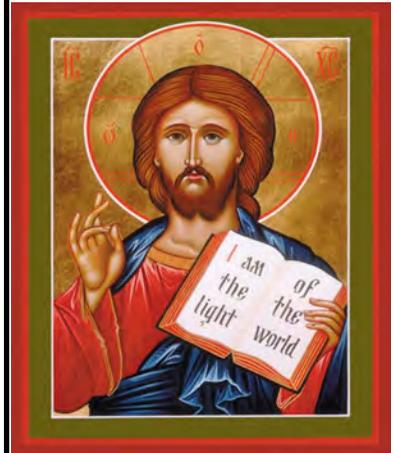
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN TODAY?

For the earlier paradigm, the afterlife is central as both promise and motive. Ultimately it is why one should be a Christian. In the form of the earlier paradigm that we all learned as children, the promise of heaven and the specter of hell loomed large. Indeed, if you had been able to convince me at age twelve that there was no afterlife, I would have had no idea why I should be a Christian. That's how central it was. The earlier paradigm can also speak of transformation in this life, especially the importance of becoming more loving. But ultimately the really important question is: Where will you spend eternity?

The Christian life is about requirements and rewards. For the earlier paradigm, at the heart of Christianity is the dynamic of requirements and rewards. The main reward, of course, is a blessed afterlife. The notion of requirements flows directly out of this emphasis on the afterlife.

The logic is simple and to some people compelling. If there is a blessed afterlife, a heaven, it doesn't seem fair that everybody gets to go there regardless of what they have believed and how they have lived. So there must be something that differentiates those who do get to go to heaven from those who don't. For those unwilling to affirm a teaching known as double predestination (the belief that God predestines some to heaven and some to hell), the "something" that differentiates those who go to heaven from those who don't must be something that we believe or do. This commonsense conclusion turns Christianity into a religion of requirements and rewards.

For Christians living within the earlier paradigm, the minimum requirement is that one be a Christian. The Bible says "Jesus is the only way," and so they are skeptical that non-Christians can be saved. And for most, what it means to be a



Christian must mean more than simply being baptized. Surely a mere ritual can't save you.

So one must be a "good" Christian. What that means is variously understood. Often within the earlier paradigm, it means believing central claims about Jesus: that he was the Son of God, born of a virgin; that he died for our sins and that God raised him physically and bodily from the dead; and that he will come again some day. And it means seeking to live in accord with the moral teachings of the bible and seeking forgiveness when we fail. It means repentance and being right with God.



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

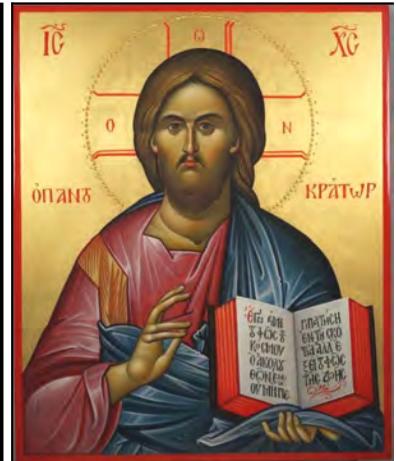
The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, STL, Ph.D.
Vol. 68 No 3 Weekend Of Zacchaeus January 16-17, 2021

SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND INNER HEALING

After we have identified the area in which the Lord wants to work at this time, we ready ourselves for the prayer for healing of memories. We center ourselves and we begin to pray by thanking God for the person for who we are praying, even and especially if that person is oneself. For if we do not feel accepted and loved by God, it will be more than difficult to accept the gift of His healing when He gives it.

Next, we describe in loving detail the scene for which we need healing. We remember what happened, we remember how we felt. We describe not only what happened as our factual memories recall it, but we also ask Jesus to show us how He was acting in that situation. We notice how He ministers to all the people in the scene: We notice what He says and what He does; we follow His lead and He asks us to forgive another or to understand another from that person's point of view, and/or to have compassion on ourselves in that situation: we accept into the depth of our own hearts the Love He has for us in the midst of all the pain we recall, and we see Him befriending us in just the way we need to be befriended, meeting our deepest needs.

We remember, however, that as we pray we do not invent all these things in our own imaginations; rather, because we have asked the Holy Spirit to guide us, we allow our intuitions to apprehend what Jesus actually was doing for us in that even long ago. Thus, this kind of prayer puts us in touch with Reality, not illusion, and we are seeing this event in



its completeness (i.e., including Jesus) for the first time.

If we have trouble imagining how Jesus was loving us in the situation, that is, if our spiritual intuitions are inhibited because of unfamiliarity with the prayer or because of some block in our personal relationship with Jesus we can use as our guide stories from the Gospels.

I will flesh this out further in the next couple of issues of this article.

The Story of Zacchaeus

People would come from small villages nestled in the hills when they heard that Jesus was passing by. Sometimes they would bring relatives and friends who were sick, so that He could heal them. Sometimes they just came to hear the words of truth that He spoke.

So why did Jesus pick Zacchaeus out? Well, Jesus was often doing surprising things. And because he was always listening to God, they were always the right things. Jesus knew who needed healing most and who would really listen to what he said. What mattered to Jesus wasn't what people looked like, whether they were tall or short, whether they were poor or rich. What mattered was what they cared about, what was in their hearts. What people were willing to do was more important than what they said.

We know from the way Zacchaeus acted that he wasn't the sort of person to just sit around and think about doing something right. He wanted to see Jesus so badly he was willing to make himself look silly by climbing a tree. And when people talked about his being a sinner, Zacchaeus didn't even deny it. Instead he promised to do good.

So who was Zacchaeus? We can't just say that he was a short man—there have been lots of short men. Or that he was a wealthy man—there have been lots of wealthy men too. The important thing is that he had a good heart. He loved Jesus and what he stood for so much that he was willing to admit his faults and change—right then. And he didn't care about what other people thought, only about what was right.