

SUNDAY OF CHEESEFARE
FORGIVENESS SUNDAY



Icon of Christ Pantocrator

A REFLECTION ON OUR REAINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this last weekend of our preparation for the Great Fast and the final week for our refection on the true meaning of **metanoia** (i.e., personal change and transformation), we hear these words from Matthew's Gospel: *If you forgive the faults of others, your heavenly Father ill forgive you yours. If you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive you.*

This is also called **Forgiveness Weekend**. It directs us to see that the Great Lent is a journey of liberation from our enslavement to sin. The Gospel lesson highlights the conditions for our effort to free ourselves from the dictatorship of the flesh and matter. To be effective, however, our fast must not be hypocritical or a "showing off" to others. Rather, we must "appear to others that we are not fasting. It is only for our Heavenly Father to see.

The extending of **forgiveness to all others** is absolutely essential. If we cannot forgive others, we are incapable of receiving the forgiveness of the Father. Its not that He refuses to give forgiveness, we can receive it.

Therefore, the break-through is forgiveness - the return to unity, solidarity, and love. To forgive is to put between me and "others" the radiant forgiveness of God Himself. To forgive is to reject the hopeless "dead-ends" of human relations and to refer them to Christ. Forgiveness is truly the "breakthrough" of the Kingdom of God into this sinful and fallen world.

Forgiveness has to happen in our



hearts and minds. We have to try and not judge the intentions of others, but, rather, to accept them as they are. We cannot allow our thoughts to be clouded by our desire to be right. We have to always realize that some people will be with us and others against us. Our main focus must be on **who we want to be in God's Kingdom?** Do we want to be God's children?

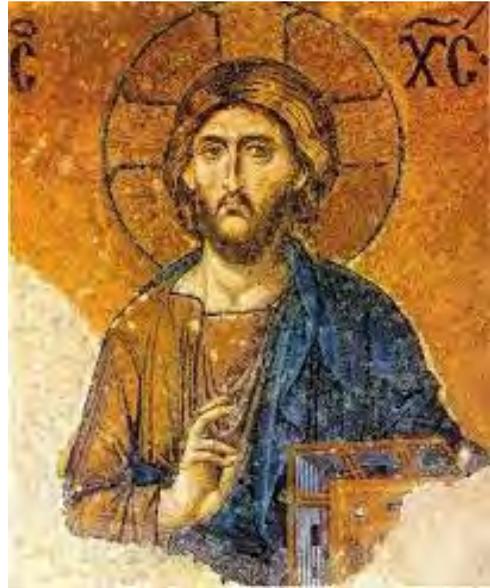
In God's Kingdom all humans are created equal and of infinite worth. God resides in all humans, whether they are aware it or are not. All humans are instilled with God's Life. All humans are called into existence by the power of God's LOVE. This means that each of us experience life in a very unique way. We can never compare the relationship we have with God with the experience of others. We are all unique in God's Kingdom and He deals with each of us in a very unique way.

Let us in our hearts and minds today forgive any and all persons who we feel we are estranged from. Let nothing stand in the way of offering to them real forgiveness.

LIVING THIS 2021 GRAET FAST

Monday, February 15th begins the 2021 Great Fast. It is meant to be a time of true spiritual growth because we more intensely focus on the life, death and resurrection of Christ. It was the first, great focused period in early Christianity. Originally the Church only celebrated the death and resurrection of Christ. Why? Because it became, in their minds, the NEW EXODUS (i.e. Christ leading people out of bondage to salvation and freedom). He, Christ, by His actions led people out of bondage to “sin” and “self-deception”, to the freedom of the Kingdom of God which allows us to truly be free to return God’s love and to truly come to understand the true meaning and purpose of life.

During the Great Fast we ask ourselves, what is the Master, Christ, attempting to teach us? The Great Fast focuses on the “free” and “voluntary” response of Jesus to the challenges of His life. He responds in the same way to all of His challenges. He LOVES. He doesn’t allow His desperate situations to dictate how He responds. The Gospels tell us that He tells us that He could call upon a “host of His Father’s angels to rescue Him”. He didn’t try to escape from the challenges of His life but, rather, embrace them since they modeled how spiritual growth is brought is accomplished. Without challenges, there is no spiritual growth. Life is all about learning how to respond to life’s challenges and to make them opportunities of spiritual growth.



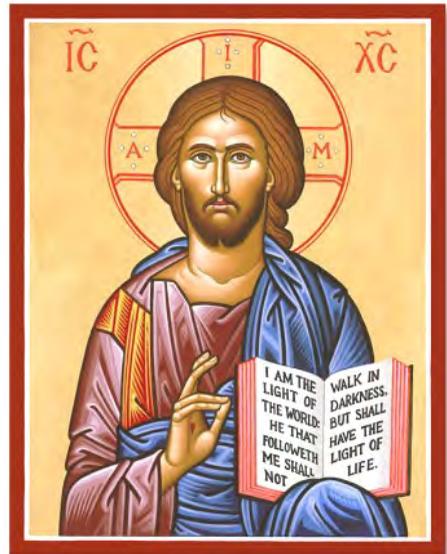
Although this is the general task of life, it is more intensely highlighted during the time of the Great Fast. Why? Because the Great Fast was, from its earliest time, focused on the catechesis of potential of new members to this spiritual movement. The Great Fast was a preparation time for Initiation into the Church. The five weeks before and the six weeks (this includes the Great and Holy Week), were time when the Church taught people, who would be initiated into the Church, about the faith. The stress was, and still is, about seeing our relationship with God directly connected to our relationship with others. It is all about being like Christ and making God’s Kingdom real in the portion of the universe in which we live. It is all about being like Christ and making God’s Kingdom real, right now.

THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

The love of two persons which leads them to marriage, yet which, however true it may be, is subject as created love to corruption, is strengthened by the church's sacrament and broadened to an infinite degree; it is made eternal; it is changed in a radical way; it is transformed without being abolished into a dimension of the love which God has for the world. The union of husband and wife is grafted onto the great mystery of the union of Christ with the world, which raises the world - and the new family which is being created - into ecclesial communion.

It has been my experience that quite frequently young couples, preparing for marriage, find it difficult to comprehend that marriage is more than just living together and liking one another. They frequently fail to understand that God has, in some mysterious and wonderful way, has called them to be husband and wife. Marriage is not just about "mutual attraction" to one another. It is all about God choosing someone who can help you to spiritually grow. He, God, chooses who comes into our lives for the sake of our spiritual growth.

Further, our modern society as totally distorted this concept. When we fail to make God a part of the equation, we fail to truly understand the equation. If we see God as a part of the process of bringing people together for the sake of their salvation, we begin to see the wondrous design of His creation. He has people come into our lives for the sake of our salvation. Sometimes that means "salvation" because it means marriage. But this whole process is true of our regular lives. If we see all persons who come across our lives as a real



sign of help to salvation, we truly begin to see the design of earthly human life. There is no one who crosses our life that isn't a means to help us come to salvation, whether that person is positive or negative. The positive persons support us in our quest for salvation. The negative persons are the opportunities for us to change our hearts and minds and, therefore, also lead to salvation which is personal change and transformation.

Of course it is all a matter of how we perceive life. If I perceive life as an opportunity for me to spiritually grow, I take all of my encounters with others as an opportunity to unconditionally love.

St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



VIRTUAL ADULT DISCUSSION SESSIONS

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

To participate in these discussions, you must register at:

<http://stmichaelarchangel.org/>

and click on Adult Discussion Group. Non-registered persons cannot join the discussion.

PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY

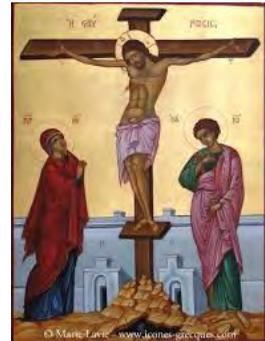
Every Friday at 7:00 PM

Throughout the Great Fast, we will be serving the Presanctified Liturgy each Friday evening at 7:00 PM. It will also be life-streamed.



LIVING THE NEW LIFE

Living the New Life is all about our desire to become more like Jesus Who was the Father's model given to us on how to live this earthly life. Jesus truly showed us how to live. He refused to live in ac-



cord to His human instincts and live as a Son of the Heavenly Father. He attempted in all that He did to live according to His belief in God as the lover of mankind and the lover of His "chosen people."

Jesus, Who saw Himself as one of the "chosen people of God", realized that this called Him to treat people as He wanted to be treated; to not judge others; and to unconditionally love others. He drew these ideas from His Jewish Faith. He made His beliefs real by the way that He treated others, even unto the last moment of His death.

He died as He lived, that is with love for others, even those who were cast aside by His society. He had a deep sense of concern for others, and made His concern by the way that He treated others. What a wonderful model we have about what it means to be a human being. (Continued on page 8)

A PRAYER A DAY FOR THE 2021 GREAT FAST

GREAT FAST PRAYERS

Please know that I don't present these Great Fast prayers as sophisticated spiritual literature. They are just my humble prayers before God as I make this journey to Easter. I would invite you to join me in this journey to Easter and use, with me, this time to truly express yourself to God in your own way. Therefore I would welcome and encourage all who might read these prayers to supply me with prayers they are saying during this time. I will share them with my readers.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15th

Heavenly Father, today I begin my efforts to prepare myself for the Great and Holy Week and Easter. While I know I have forty days to prepare myself, I beg Your help at the beginning to make this time spiritually rewarding. I know that with Your help I can achieve this. For it to be spiritually rewarding, I know I must work to achieve inner peace and quiet. Help me to discover internal peace and calmness, knowing that if I can achieve this, I will be able to discover more fully Your presence within me. Help me to make the goal of my efforts a deeper union and relationship with You, my God. I make this prayer to You Who I know to be Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16th

Heavenly Father, as I reflect on my

past efforts at personal change, I realize I have not sufficiently cooperated with the help You offer me through Your Spirit within me. Help me to become more attuned to Your Spirit and allow Him to guide my path and strengthen my efforts. I realize I must honestly assess my attitudes and behaviors. I find that in this very confusing and difficult time in our country I often frequently allow myself to judge others and find fault with them. Help me to temper my tendency to judge others and, rather, to imitate Your Son Jesus Who unconditionally loved all others regardless of how they treated Him. I make this prayer to You Who I know to be Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN**

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17th

Heavenly Father, as I struggle to enter fully into the spirit of this Great Fast, I know and believe that it is only You Who can help me achieve the inner peace and quiet that is so necessary not only for my ability to pray but also my desire to personally change the way I think and behave. I realize that I too frequently allow myself to become distracted from the goal of just placing myself in Your presence. I know that I allow the cares of my life to surface too quickly to be able to maintain my inner peace. So today I pray for Your help to maintain my inner quietude. I make this prayer to You Who I know to be Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

A PRAYER A DAY FOR THE 2021 GREAT FAST

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18th

Heavenly Father, I realize that I frequently live either in the past or the future instead of the present moment. I realize that it is only in the present moment that I can encounter You, my loving God. Help me to disregard the past and not attempt also to anticipate the events of the future. Rather, help me to encounter You in the present moment. Help me to truly believe that You are calling me, because of Your great love, into existence at this very moment. Knowing this, help me, at the very moment, to offer You my sincerest gratitude. Help me to also offer my very life back to You in Thanksgiving. I make this prayer to You Who I know to be Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19th

Heavenly Father, I again come to You asking for Your help. I truly desire to make this Great Fast a time of spiritual growth and personal change. I know, however, that I cannot achieve this without Your help. Help me first to truly believe that You have given me the potential for personal change if I cooperate with Your Spirit within me. Help me to also believe that I can become more like Your Son Jesus if I give myself to this task with Your help. I believe You revealed to me through Your Son Jesus how I should live this present earthly life and that this is the goal of this life. I make this prayer to You Who I know to be Father, Son and

Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20th

Heavenly Father help me to continue my efforts at making this 2021 Great Fast a time of real spiritual growth and personal change. Help me to become more deeply aware of what I must change in my life to become ever more like Your Son Jesus. I realize I cannot change all that needs to be changed but just give me the help to at least undertake one thing that I, at least, can do to become more like Jesus. I believe that with Your help and guidance this is possible. I also know, however, that prayer and fasting can help me to cooperate more fully with Your Spirit Who is within me. I make this prayer to You Who I know to be Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE THE FAST REAL IN MY LIFE?

There are several things: (1) actually make time for daily prayer; (2) make time to read the New Testament each day; (3) make peace with someone who you are currently at odds with; (4) support someone who you know is shut-in and perhaps isolated and lonely; (5) support some charity that is providing service and food to the homeless and poor; and (6) make sure you actually express your love to someone in your life. We frequently forget about this. Do something that will spiritually challenge you. This is what the Great Fast is all about.

Schedule of Services

St. Michael the Archangel
Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church
6340 Chase Road
Dearborn, MI 48126

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

Rectory: (313) 582-1424
Cell: (313) 580-4412
WRuchgy@gmail.com

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Sundays @ 10:00 AM
Ukrainian & English

Weekdays @ 8:00 AM
English

SACRAMENTS

Penance
By Appointment

Baptism & Matrimony
*In most instances membership
required for six months*

Funerals
*Membership of an immediate
family member required*

Parish Life Council

Bob & Corinne Boyko
734.451.1893

John & Janet Dicky
586.755.3129

Daria Drobny
313.791-0292

Robert Krokosky
248.734.7078

Leo & Mary LaDouceur
313.278.7378

Gordon Malaniak
734.564.9817

Rev Deacon Leonard Mier
313.584-6795

Greg & Esther Petrovich
734.453-4354

Rafic Vawter
313.624.9867

Sunday, February 14 - Weekend of Cheesefare
10:00 AM - Special Intention - Live Streamed

1st WEEK OF THE GREAT FAST - Tone 5

Monday, February 15 - Onesimus, Apostle
No Service Scheduled

Tuesday, February 16 - Pamphilius & Others, Martyrs
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday, February 17 - Theodore the Recruit, Great-Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Thursday, February 18 - Leo the Great, Pope
No Service Scheduled

Friday, February 19 - Archippus, Apostle
7:00 PM - Presanctified Liturgy - Live Streamed

Saturday, February 20 - Miracle of the Great Martyr Theodore
No Service Scheduled

Sunday, February 21 - First Weekend of the Great Fast
10:00 AM - Special Intention - Live Streamed

(Continued from page 5 - Living The New Life)

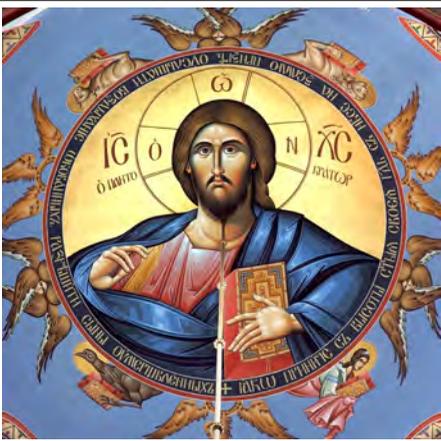
Jesus has shown us that the way to truly enter into a relationship with God is by truly developing “genuine” relationships with other human beings who are, whether they realize it or not, “temples of God’s Spirit”.



Jesus treated all who He encountered as “children of God”. (By the way, this approach toward life was not the result of Him also being God. Rather, it was because of His belief in God, a belief He received from His family. To believe otherwise diminishes His great achievement, namely His attitude and behavior towards all others.) I suspect that His understanding of God as a loving God, was greatly influenced by His mother’s love of God. She had totally, just as her parents before her, placed her hope and trust in God. Her attitude, I am sure, greatly influences the development of Jesus as a Human Being. She had a realistic understanding of God and truly, in every way, placed her trust and hope in Him.

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

BECOMING A HEALING PRESENCE



As you can tell, I truly believe that one of the most important things we can attempt to accomplish is to become a “healing person.” Why is this important? Because it allows me to continue the work of Christ and also heals me. As I become a healing person, something happens to me - I am healed of past memories and past hurt feelings. This then frees me to make God’s Kingdom more real to others who I encounter.

We, unfortunately, often infer motives in others because we think we know best. We can never really know what is going on in an other person’s life. All we can do is to be present to them and support them in their struggle.

In the past several issues I have talked about “ambiguity” and how we must deal with it if

we desire to become a healing persons. The way out of ambiguity is continual prayer, saying the name of Jesus over and over. St. Hesychius said, “The more the rain pours down upon earth, the more it softens the earth; so too the holy name of Christ, the more we call upon it, the more it softens the earth of our heart, and fills it with joy and delight.”

Ambiguity is all about loss of control. Control is a defense mechanism against immaturity and fear. We fear the things we are not mature enough to handle.

What can we expect if we try to be more open to a sense of ambiguity? Initially we will likely be hit with confusion and despondency. Abba Poemen said, “Acedia (despondency) is there every time one begins something, and there is no worse passion, but if a man recognizes it for what it is, he will gain peace.”

It is amazing, I truly believe, that when we embrace an effort of personal change and spiritual transformation, we greatly benefit. We gain greater inner peace and we have a much clearer understanding of the meaning and the purpose of our life. Who doesn’t want interior peace and an awareness of why we are here?

Ambiguity is similar to cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance is disharmony between differing thoughts or between thoughts and behaviors.

Embracing ambiguity requires an attitude adjustment. We need to drop our mental burdens and “cast our burdens on the Lord.” It surely means dropping our tendency to live either in the past or the future and surly means to curb our tendency to worry about things. When we worry about things we restrict our ability to not only to live in the present moment but our ability to really encounter God.

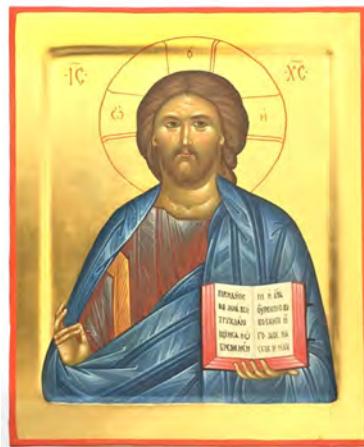
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN TODAY?

I truly realize that this may be a “headerer” article (perhaps more abstract and theoretical), but first I don’t want to insult the intelligence of my readers and second I think this is something we should be thinking about. I am attempting to move Christian beliefs beyond ‘myth’ and ‘simple adherence to rules and regulations.’ Things are changing. That is OK in my estimation. In the past we only talked about “obligations” and “commandments” or dictated, non-personal ways of living as Christians. It is essential, in my estimation, that we become intelligent, thinking Christians.

I ended the last issue of the article by sharing with my readers this thought: *The point is not to believe in the Bible and the Christian tradition, but to live within them as a metaphor and sacrament of the sacred, as a means whereby the Spirit continues to speak to us today.*

The emerging paradigm sees *the Christian life* as a life of relationship and transformation. Being Christian is not about meeting requirements for a future reward in an afterlife, and not very much about believing. Rather, the Christian life is about a relationship with God that transforms life in the present. To be Christian does not mean believing in Christianity, but a relationship with God lived within the Christian tradition as a metaphor and sacrament of the sacred. This requires that we take a much more intelligent approach and not just blindly embracing beliefs which we have not even thought about or reflected upon.

To preview one more feature of the emerging paradigm: it affirms religious pluralism. In this paradigm Christianity is one of the world’s great enduring religions, the response to the experience of God in our particular cultural stream. Yet the particularity of Christianity is not lost. It is important to affirm the great value of the distinctiveness of the Christian tradition. There are truly significant



differences between the various views of Christianity. They almost produce two different religions by using the same Bible and language.

The two ways of being Christian are often suspicious of, even hostile toward, each other. From the earlier paradigm’s point of view, the emerging paradigm looks like a reduction of Christianity.

I would like, during the coming issues of this article, to highlight the very basic differences between the traditional paradigm of Christianity and the “emerging” paradigm. As Christians living in a modern world, we must be prepared to deal with the differences.



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, STL, Ph.D.
Vol. 68 No 7 Weekend Of Cheesefare February 13-14, 2021

SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND INNER HEALING

In the last issue of this article I shared with my readers that spiritual growth comes about when I can truly say with confidence that I understand that I am in the Father because I am in the Person of Jesus Christ. I realize that this may not be the easiest idea to comprehend. It has to do with our whole idea of God taking on human nature in the Person of Jesus, His only-begotten Son. Because Jesus has a human nature, we, who also have a human nature, are one with Him. He truly becomes God's revelation to us humans how we are called to live as human beings. It is because the Father raised Jesus from the dead that we understand that He and the Father are one; it is because He is risen that we understand that He is in us and we in Him. Healing of memories works, we can see, because Jesus died and rose from the dead; it does not work because we want it to, because we say

the right words, or because we use our imaginations and so make this prayer feel more lively than other prayers. Because Jesus rose from the dead, He can live in us (seeing Christ in the events of our lives) and we can live in Him (seeing Christ in the events of our lives) and we can live in Him (seeing ourselves in the events of Christ's life). These ways of praying for healing of memories, in other words, fulfill the Scriptures and help every part of us - our past as well as our present and our future - to be one with Him.



Another benefit of praying to see ourselves in the events of Christ's life is that by doing so we can come to discover from the inside the power that made Jesus' life great.

All this calls us to make our religion real - to make it a religion that is focused on developing an ever deeper relationship with God through the Person of Jesus in the Holy Spirit.

True Fasting

“Why do we fast, and you do not see it? afflict ourselves, and you take no note of it? Lo, on your fast day you carry out your own pursuits, and drive all your laborers. Yes, your fast ends in quarreling and fighting, striking with wicked claw. Would that today you might fast so as to make your voice heard on high! Is this the manner of fasting I wish, of keeping a day of penance: That a man bow his head like a reed, and lie in sackcloth and ashes? Do you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord?

This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; Setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; Sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; Clothing

the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own.

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall quickly be healed; Your vindication shall go before you, and the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer, you shall cry for help, and he will say: Here I am!

If you remove from your midst oppression, false accusation and malicious speech; If you bestow your bread on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted; Then light shall rise for you in the darkness, and the gloom shall become for you like midday.”

The Prophet Isaiah (58:3-9)