

FIRST SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST  
SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

Ἡ ἀναθήλωσις τῶν ἁγίων εἰκόνων



*Icon of the Holy Images*

## A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this first weekend of the Great Fast our readings are taken from St Paul's letter to the Hebrews and John's Gospel. St Paul exhorts the Hebrews and us to *keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, who inspires and perfects our faith*. The Great Fast also calls us to keep our eyes "fixed" on Jesus since He is God's revelation to us about how we should live as humans. We are called to embrace the ***Jesus Way of Living***.

And what is the Jesus Way of Living? Unconditional love, respect and acceptance of all other humans. Why? Because they, whether they are aware of it or not, are also Temples of God's Spirit. Living humans are all temples of God's Spirit Who calls them into and sustains them in existence.

Jesus recognized that there is only one life force in the entire universe and that life force is God Himself. While each human being is unique in his/her personality, we all share in the very same life force.

Our Gospel reading tells the story of how Philip and Nathanael became followers of Jesus. Philip came from the same town as Andrew and Peter. When Jesus simply said "follow me", Philip immediately sought out Nathanael. Nathanael's first response questioned whether "anything good could come out of Nazareth". Philip, however, convinced him to come and meet Jesus.

When Jesus met Nathanael He declared that Nathanael was a man



without guile and then, after questioned by Nathanael, reveals that He, Jesus, saw him, Nathanael, under a fig tree. With that Nathanael immediately embraces the Way of Jesus.

As we begin the Great Fast, we must realize that we, like Nathanael and Philip, are called by Jesus to "follow Him." What is our response. If we desire to follow Him, then we will use the time of the Great Fast to work on our spiritual life. We will choose something that we can "change" and "make better" in our life, imitating our Master. Let us use this time to truly grow in our faith and to change ourselves at least a little.



## THE ICON OF THE GREAT FAST

Perhaps, besides an icon of the Crucifixion, the icon “not-made-by human-hands”, is the icon of the Great Fast. It has a long history and, over the next several weeks, I would like to share it with my readers.

It goes by several different names. The first is **Veil of Veronica**, or **Sudarium** (Latin for sweat-cloth), or simply called the **Veronica**, and is a Christian relic consisting of a piece of cloth said to bear an image of the Holy Face of Jesus produced by other than human means (an *acheiropolieton* "made without hand"). Various existing images have been claimed to be the original relic, as well as early copies of it. Representations of it are also known as *vernicles*.

The story of the image's origin is related to the Sixth Station of the Cross, wherein Saint Veronica, encountering Jesus along the Via Dolorosa to Calvary, wipes the blood and sweat from his face with her veil. According to some versions, St. Veronica later traveled to Rome to present the cloth to the Roman Emperor Tiberius. The veil, possessing the Grace of God, has been said to quench thirst, cure blindness, and even raise the dead.

The first written evidence of the story is from the Middle Ages and during the fourteenth century the veil became a central icon in the Western Church. In the words of art



historian Neil Macgregor, "From [the 14th Century] on, wherever the Roman Church went, the Veronica would go with it." The act of Saint Veronica wiping the face of Jesus with her veil is celebrated in the sixth Station of the Cross.

There is no reference to the story of Veronica and her veil in the canonical Gospels. The closest written reference is the miracle of Jesus healing the bleeding woman by touching the hem of His garment. Her name is later identified as Veronica by the apocryphal "Acts of Pilate".

It is different from the Shroud of Turin, which, it is said, is the burial cloth of Jesus. Unlike the Shroud, there has never been any attempt to by the Church to have a relic of the face of Jesus analyzed as the Shroud has been analyzed.

# THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

I have been sharing in this article the “fruits’ of the spiritual life. In the last several issues I have been sharing thoughts about the fruits that are inherent in the “marriage” state. I have also quoted from the Eastern writer and theologian Kavalas. He explains in his treatises which have a social content, that the justice which governs relations between human beings and organizes their social life, in order to become really effective, is called to be transformed into a Godlike justice, that is, into a justice which reflects the justice of God and activates it within society, for God’s justice is that sublime harmony and love in which God originally created the world and now recreates it in Christ. All of the functions of life are called to be transformed in Christ and are capable of being so. We can, if we cooperate with the Holy Spirit Who God has placed within us, work at our human limitations as humans and use the potential we have to more closely imitate Christ.

Moreover, it becomes clear that the spiritual life is not an escape from the world but a transformation of it. It is

not a change of place but a change of manner of existing and living. We live in God, writes Kavalas, “in this way...we remove our life from this visible world to the unseen world by changing not our place but our life in all its aspects”. This means that we challenge our “attitudes” about life, God, ourselves and others, and we bring these attitudes more into line with the attitudes which Jesus portrayed when on earth. We challenge our behaviors and ask ourselves how much we are trying to “live like Jesus.” So we make an effort to change our attitudes and behaviors to be more like those of Jesus.

One of the big problems is that we humans don’t know how to assess our “attitudes” which form the impetus of our “behaviors”. This, I think, is a real problem of our modern society. We humans embrace, and it is a very subtle embrace, the attitudes of our society which “judge” others and see others as “enemies” to our “American way of living”. Check your attitudes. Do you see minorities as threatening your way of living? Is this something that Jesus would do?



# St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



## VIRTUAL ADULT DISCUSSION SESSIONS

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. If you would just like  
to read the article that is being  
discussed but not participate in the  
discussion, simply send me an email:

[wruhgy@gmail.com](mailto:wruhgy@gmail.com)

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## LENTEN SERVICES

*Friday evenings at 7:00 PM - Live-Streamed*

This is just a reminder that we are  
serving the Presanctified Liturgy each  
Friday even at 7:00 PM and also  
streaming it. We also have seating for  
32 people in the Church.

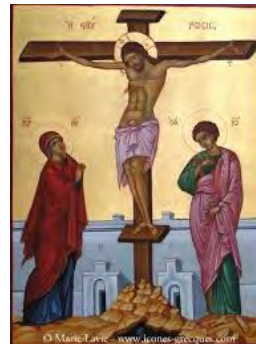
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## FASTING AND POPE FRANCIS

- ◆ Fast from bitterness and fill your hearts with joy
- ◆ Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude
- ◆ Fast from worries and have trust in God

## LIVING THE NEW LIFE

Living the New Life, that is living the Way of Jesus, is something that can totally change our understanding of the meaning of life and can change us for the better. also, one of the side effects



of embracing the Way of Jesus is that we find interior peace. Something which, I am sure, would be a precious gift in this strange time of social unrest and COVID19. The Way of Jesus also helps us to stop worrying about the things of this life and to focus on personal transformation, the true task of this earthly existence.

Some might ask “How do I know what the Way of Jesus is?” If you are not sure about the Way of Jesus, then pick up the New Testament and read about the life of Jesus. I seems to become very apparent, I believe, what His “Way of living” is. It involves making sure that my attitudes and, consequently, my behaviors are like His. It all starts with one fundamental attitude and that is to unconditionally love all others regardless of how they treat you. You keep one thing in mind and that is

*(Continued on page 8)*

# A PRAYER A DAY FOR THE 2021 GREAT FAST

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## **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Heavenly Father, as I think about my life and my place in Your creation, I realize that I have been called, just like the first disciples, to make Your Kingdom real by the way that I treat others. I know that Your Son, my brother, Jesus made others aware of You by the way that He treated them. They always walked away, after encountering Him, with a feeling that they were special. Help me to also make the people I encounter feel the same way. He, Jesus, never allowed His response to others be based on how they treated Him. Rather, He unconditionally loved them. I know this is what I am called to do. I ask this of You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

## **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Heavenly Father help me to use this time of the Great Fast to open my heart and mind to Your revelation through Jesus. He revealed that if I attempt to unconditionally love others and not base my response to others on how they treat me, I will spiritually grow and I will find inner peace. I truly believe that if I try to live like Jesus, not only will I make Your Kingdom more real for myself and others but that I will deeply benefit from the effort. What You revealed through Jesus is that not only His way of living makes Your Kingdom real but it truly benefits me, helping me to live life. I ask this of You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

## **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24<sup>th</sup>**

Heavenly Father today the Church remembers St. John the Baptizer, remembering two different times when his

head was found. Herod, I know from Scripture, had him decapitated because he challenged how Herod was living. John, a cousin of Jesus, began the preaching of this theme which Jesus continued, namely: *Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand.* This theme calls me to seize the present moment to experience You, my God, and to make Your Kingdom real not only for myself but for others by the way I attempt to live. I know that if I try to live more like Jesus, I will make your Kingdom real, right now at this present moment. I ask this of You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

## **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25<sup>th</sup>**

Heavenly Father help me to increase my efforts at becoming Your child which I know I can only achieve by trying to imitate Jesus more closely and intensely, Your only begotten Son and my brother. He revealed to me, I truly believe, how You, Father, intended humans to live. I know that if I make an attempt to live like Him, I will not only become Your child, but I will also make Your Kingdom real in the area of the world in which I live and work. This means that I must truly desire to become a disciple of Jesus. I beg the help of Your Holy Spirit Who, I believe is within me. I ask this of You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

***How is the 2021 Great Fast going? Are you engaged in trying to spiritually grow?***

# A PRAYER A DAY FOR THE 2021 GREAT FAST

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## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26<sup>th</sup>

Heavenly Father I am almost completing the second week of the Great Fast. Help me to redouble my efforts to make this a time of spiritual growth. Help me to not only increase my time at prayer and reflection but also to do those things that help me to spiritually grow. I know that this is a special time to make Your Kingdom real by the way that I treat others. I know that one of the things I can do is to “contact” others who I know may be alone or shut in. Help me to consider reaching out to them to make their world a happier place because of my thoughtfulness and consideration. I ask this of You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27<sup>th</sup>

Heavenly Father, as I complete this second week of the Fast, I realize that I have not yet selected one thing that I can work on to more closely imitate Jesus. I need to look more closely at my life and decide what attitudes or behaviors I can work on to advance my spiritual growth. I ask Your help to focus my efforts during this time and make a sincere commitment to work on my personal transformation. I know that a part of the difficulty is facing this COVID19 epidemic. I feel, in many ways isolated and alone. Help me not to worry about what could happen but, rather, embrace a life of personal change. I ask this of You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

## SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28<sup>th</sup>

Heavenly Father, today’s Gospel miracle story, the curing of the paralytic at Capernaum, reminds me that in so many ways I am paralyzed and stymied in my efforts to change. Although I say that I want to change and become more like Jesus, I find that I do not seem to have sufficient commitment to the process. I ask Your help. I realize that personal change is not an easy process. I get stuck in my old ways of thinking and acting. I need to make a greater commitment. I need to apply myself more diligently to the process. I know that Your Spirit within me can help me and so I implore Your help. I ask this of You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

### **SO ASK YOURSELF TODAY**

What have I done so far to make this Great Fast a special time of spiritual growth for me? Have I really even thought about the Great Fast? Is it something on my mind? Am I allowing the cares and pressures of life to get in the way of my efforts at spiritual growth? If so, why? We have just really begun our 40 day time of special effort at spiritual growth. If the Great Fast (Lent) is not on your mind, now is the time to make an effort to think about it. Remember, this could be your last Great Fast - we never know when we will be called to move onto the next stage of our life.

# 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 Wawter  
313.624.9867

**Sunday, February 21 - First Weekend of the Great Fast - Tone 5**  
**10:00 AM - Special Intention - Live Streamed**

## **2nd WEEK OF THE GREAT FAST - Tone 6**

Monday, February 22 - Finding the Relics of the Martyrs of Eugenia  
*No Service Scheduled*

Tuesday, February 23 - Polycarp, Bishop-Martyr  
*No Service Scheduled*

Wednesday, February 24 - Findings of the Head of John the Baptizer  
*No Service Scheduled*

Thursday, February 25 - Tarasius, Patriarch  
*No Service Scheduled*

**Friday, February 26 - Porphyry of Gaza, Bishop**  
**7:00 PM - Presanctified Liturgy - Live Streamed**

Saturday, February 27 - Procopius, Venerable Confessor  
*No Service Scheduled*

**Sunday, February 28 - Second Weekend of the Great Fast - Tone 6**  
**10:00 AM - Special Intention - Live Streamed**

*(Continued from page 5 - Living The New Life)*

God is within all other humans whether they are aware of it or not. That is the reason why we love all others regardless of how they treat us. We love them, respect them and accept them as they are because we are aware of God's lifeforce within them.



Of course we may have to take one step backward first in order to be able to see all others in this way. The step backward is to become deeply aware of the fact that God is within us, calling us into existence. I think sometimes we are not sufficiently aware of this fact. I have found that many people find this difficult to comprehend and yet it is essential if we are to learn how to unconditionally love others. When we are fully convinced that we are the "temples" of God's own Spirit, we begin to see all others in this same manner. This truth is not just something for us Christians. It is the truth about humankind.

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



# BECOMING A HEALING PRESENCE

This has become one of my more challenging articles to write. It is my hope, and I would hope that it is the hope of my readers, that we can become truly “a healing presence” in the part of the universe given to us to transform. I truly believe that becoming a healing presence is within range for each of us. I know that in the process of becoming a healing person for others, I heal myself and become more like Jesus.

Becoming a truly healing presence is a code phrase for loving others as best we can. It is code for actively listening to others, intuiting their needs, and serving them in whatever we can.

We become a healing presence because Christ is the healing Presence through us. He is “all in all” through us to others. We can’t give what we don’t have. We can’t give Christ’s healing presence to others if we are not intimate with Him ourselves. We grow in intimacy with Him through stillness and prayer.

St. Theophan said that the essence of the Christian life is to keep the mind in the heart before God. Christ moves through us as a healing fire to the extent that we allow ourselves to be open and available to Him. We need to spend quiet time with Him, gently speaking His name or saying the Jesus

Prayer, and we need to do all we can to have conscious contact with Him all day and when we awake during the night.

Becoming a healing presence is a simple process. All we have to do is do what we can. As St Irenaeus said, “We need to relax in God’s hands.” Yes, it is a simple process, but because we are human and in some ways complicated,

it is both simple and difficult. We tend to make it more difficult than it needs to be. This is because we humans have a real fear of personal change. In order to become a “healing presence”, we have to want to change and to become more like Jesus. We have to be

willing to give up attitudes which tend to have us “judge others” and to withhold unconditional love of others. We will never become a “healing presence” in our world if we withhold our love of others, regardless of how they treat us. It really doesn’t matter how they treat us. It matters how we respond to their lack of unconditional love. The focus must be on “How we conduct our lives.” We must decide to respond to the challenges of life as Jesus did. When we do this, we most likely will accomplish some spiritual growth! The major task of life on earth is to spiritually grow.



## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN TODAY?

This has been one of the more difficult articles to write since I have been attempting to dislodge some of the old ideas which, I suspect, my readers have had about religion. For example, I have attempted to dislodge the idea of "OBLIGATION". If we introduce the idea of "obligation" into the practice of religion, we destroy the "free and voluntary" response of persons to God. God doesn't want robots. If He did, He would have created us like the angels who, according to tradition, were given an initial choice which truly signed their total future.

Rather, God created us humans with free wills and only asks that we think of voluntarily responding to His call to return His love. Truly no "obligatory action of response" to worship Him will accomplish this. I have to willingly and freely choose to worship Him if I am truly His child (i.e., this is what it means to be an Adult Child of the Heavenly Father).

Being an Adult Child of the Heavenly Father means that I truly seen the efficacy of returning His love. Why? Because it also enhances my life. I begin to see the meaning and purpose of life and things begin to make a whole lot of common sense.

For, why do we humans have to suffer different diseases and

epidemics? They are not punishments that God is inflecting upon a very anti-God society. Rather, they are truly challenges that give us an opportunity to respond like Jesus.

I have come across a whole lot of conspiratorial theories about COVID19 theories. God IS NOT PUNISHING US for things we may have done. Human life in this environment is fragile. There are things like viruses and bacteria in our world. They are not punishments for how we live, but they are surly challenges to how we live. We have to adopt a sensible approach to all the things that life presents to us. I see



many "crazy" responses to the various challenges of life. Jesus was not crazy in his approach to life. We are called to be NOT CRAZY in our reaction to the challenges of life.

The emerging new paradigm of Christianity is to take a more "intelligent and sensible" approach to the events of life. First, it calls us to not see God as the "SUPREME PUNISHER" but rather as the "LOVING FATHER." Jesus did not see the Father as a PUNISHER when He had to embrace the horrors of the Cross. Rather, He martial all of His strengths as a human believer in God to help me go through the horrors of the Cross. Can't we do the same with COVID19?



# THE EASTERN HERALD

## СХІДНИЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, STL, Ph.D.  
Vol. 68 No 8 1st Weekend Of The Great Fast February 20-21, 2021

### SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND INNER HEALING

Spiritual growth and inner healing are intimately and intrinsically connected. As I have suggested in the last several issues of this article, one of things that can help us spiritually grow is “seeing ourselves in Christ’s Life. One of the benefits 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. By placing ourselves in a close and personal relationship with Jesus and seeing ourselves as persons whom He heals or which whom He converses, or by so closely identifying with

him that, because He lives in us and we in Him, we take His place in a scene from His own personal life. For example, as we reflect on His birth or His baptism, we can begin to have an inside view of how and why He did the things He did. By entering the life of Christ in this way we come to an understanding of Him that our

intellects alone cannot give, because, for a while, through our imaginations we walk in His sandals, we feel His healing touch, or we hear His captivating words.



I know that most of my readers remember this old saying: *If you really want to know someone, you have to be willing to walk in his shoes.* This is truly a very creative use of our human imagination. We can put ourselves in the shoes of Jesus.

For example, think about how you would react if one of your friends betrayed you. Then reflect on how Jesus reacted to Judas’ betrayal. Or, how would you react if someone belittled and criticized you when you were attempting to help someone who need help? Then reflect on how Jesus repeatedly handled this in His life.

This is what it means to see ourselves in the life of Christ. It will surely help us to spiritually grow.



## *Icons Show the Human Face of God*

In recent months my Sunday reflections have frequently focused on our Christian brothers and sisters of the East. Wishing as it were to embrace their rich tradition of faith in a single glance, today I would like to refer once again to the sense of mystery which is apparent in their icons. The East and the West vie with each other to put their art at the service of the faith.

But from the East, where icons had to be defended with bloodshed in the iconoclast crisis of the eighth and ninth centuries, comes a particular call jealously to preserve the religious nature of this art. It is based on the mystery of the Incarnation, in which God chose to assume a human face. In the last analysis, sacred art seeks to transmit something of the mystery of that face.

This is why the East firmly insists on the spiritual qualities which must characterize the artist, to whom Simeon of Thessalonica, the great defender of Tradition, addresses this important exhortation: "Teach with words, write with letters, paint with colors, in conformity with Tradition; the painting is true, as is the writing of books; and the grace of God is present in them, because what is represented there is holy."

By contemplating icons in the whole context of liturgical and ecclesial life, the Christian community is called to grow in its experience of God, and to become more and more a living icon of the communion of life between the Three Divine Persons.

*Pope John Paul II*