

THIRD SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST
SUNDAY OF THE HOLY CROSS



Icon of the Sunday of the Holy Cross

A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this third weekend of the Great Fast, our readings are taken again from Paul's letter to the Hebrews and also Mark's Gospel. Paul shares with us that Jesus is a compassionate High Priest. He states: *we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus ... let us hold fast to our profession of faith ... For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness.*

Paul further states: *Every high priest is taken from among men and made their representative before God.* Paul had a real sense of the role that Jesus played in the life of humankind.

The section of Mark's Gospel that we hear sets forth the "doctrine of the Cross." He states: *If a man wishes to come after me, he must deny his very self, take up his cross, and follow in my steps.*

This suggests that each human has a cross that he/she must take up and carry the way that Jesus carried His. The Cross that Jesus carried was false accusations, betrayal, cruelty, abuse and, ultimately, a horrendous and humiliating death. He carried it with nobility, grace and love. He did not allow the cruelty directed toward Him make Him unloving or bitter. Rather, He summed up the courage to "Love" all those who wronged Him and to also "Forgive" them. The way that He carried His Cross should be an inspiration to us. We will never be challenged as severely as He was. We



will never have to endure what He did. We may have difficult challenges but I can assure you that whatever we may have to go through in life can never compare to what He had to endure.

So we look to the way that He carried the challenge of His Cross and we beg God's help to give us the courage to carry our cross in a manner similar to the way He carried His. Why? Because the way that He carried His Cross was "transformative"! It made His resurrection possible.

The same can be true of us. If we attempt to imitate Jesus and the way that He carried His Cross, we will be "changed" and "transformed". This, of course is the true meaning and purpose of earthly life.

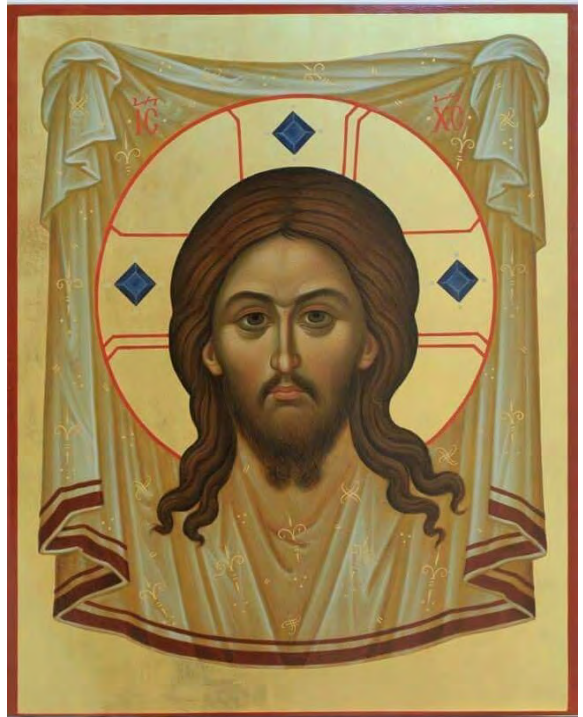
THE ICON OF THE GREAT FAST

Pope Innocent III also ordered the destruction of all existing copies. His edict declared that anyone who had access to a copy must bring it to the Vatican, under the penalty of excommunication.

After that the Veronica disappears almost entirely from public view, and its subsequent history is unrecorded. As there is no conclusive evidence that it ever left St Peter's, the possibility exists that it remains there to this day; this would be consistent with such limited information as the Vatican has provided in recent centuries.

There are at least six images in existence which bear a marked resemblance to each other and which are claimed to be the original Veil, a direct copy of it or, in two cases, the Mandylion. Each member of this group is enclosed in an elaborate outer frame with a gilded metal sheet within, in which is cut an aperture where the face appears; at the lower extreme of the face there are three points which correspond to the shape of the hair and beard.

In the case of St. Veronica, both the Eastern Orthodox and Catholic Churches have iconic representations of St. Veronica holding a cloth or napkin with the image of Christ on it. How did St. Veronica obtain this cloth? Written tradition, in the Catholic Church, says she wiped the face of Christ, as He carried His Cross. The wiping of Christ's face by St. Veronica is also remembered in the Stations of



the Cross in the Catholic Church, which is a relatively new tradition that started in the 18th century. However, a written account states that St. Veronica sought out Christ to obtain His image, and that Christ, Himself impressed His image on a cloth she gave Him. Which is accurate? We do not know.

“In written texts, her first appearance is in The Avenging of the Savior, from possibly the 7th or 8th century. In it she explains to an envoy from Rome that during his ministry Jesus had imprinted His face onto a cloth for her. The envoy takes Veronica and the cloth to Rome, where it cures the Emperor Tiberius of leprosy.

This is truly a fascinating story. It is a special icon in our Church.

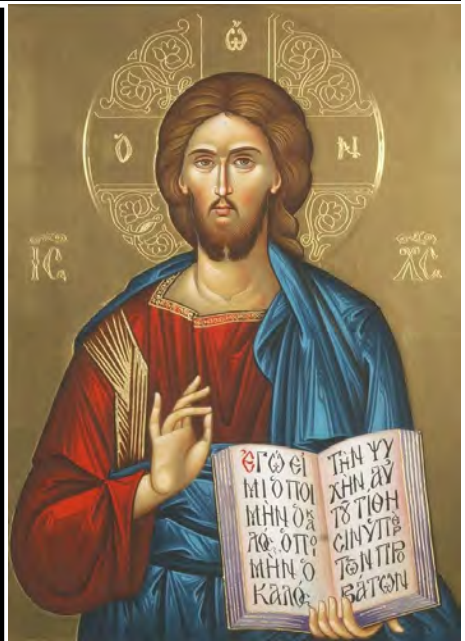
THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

By showing that the spiritual life can be lived in its fullness even in the world and by sketching the basic lines of such a way of life, Nicolas Kavalas played a leading part in the vital task of channeling the great hesychastic renaissance (*Hesychasm*, in Eastern Christianity, type of monastic life in which practitioners seek divine quietness (Greek *hēsychia*) through the contemplation of God in uninterrupted prayer. Such prayer, involving the entire human being - soul, mind, and body - is often called “pure,” or “intellectual,” prayer or the Jesus Prayer) of the fourteenth century into the world as a renaissance of liturgical and sacramental life. He thus created the basis for an Eastern Christian social spirituality. The significance of his work for our age is evident and it needs to be continued.

But equally valuable is Kavalas’s teaching on the new organization which the world receives when it is transformed into ecclesial communion, and moreover, on the specific and indeed crucial problem of the organization of this same ecclesial communion.

The reconstruction of the world within the church is successfully accomplished by the liturgical broadening and reorganizing of the basic dimensions which define the world, namely time and space.

The Church feasts scattered throughout the year are precisely the focal points which organize time in a new dimension. Easter, Christmas, Dormition, Feast of the Apostles and all the other feasts, with their fasts and their services, give time a new direction a dimension. The horizontal movement of time within creation is in this way transcended without being abolished. This transformation of time is realized and revealed pre-eminently in



the Divine Eucharist, in which all the services, fasts and feasts culminate.

Think about this. If indeed we centered our lives around the Church calendar instead of the secular calendar, wouldn’t life be quite different. For example, if we focused our lives on each day thinking about the “saint of the day”, or the “feast of the day”, would not life have quite a different feel.

You might say that this is totally impractical. Or is it? It is all a matter of what we want life to be like. Its a way to attempt to make God the center of our lives instead of some false god.

St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



VIRTUAL ADULT DISCUSSION SESSIONS

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:

wrchgy@gmail.com

LENTEN SERVICES

Friday evenings at 7:00 PM - Live-Streamed

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

FASTING AND POPE FRANCIS

- ◆ Fast from judging others and feast on Christ dwelling in them
- ◆ Fast from feat of illness and feast on the healing power of God
- ◆ Fast from words that pollute and feast on speech that purifies
- ◆ Fast from discontent and feast on gratitude.

LIVING THE NEW LIFE

As we think about the Cross of Christ, which our Church presents to us this weekend for our contemplation and reflection, we truly see a “way of living the new life.” Jesus modeled for us,



especially on the Cross, that the way we are called to respond to the hatred and cruelty of others, is with love. This is possible for human beings. Our response to others is within our control if we so desire to live this way. Jesus responded to the cruelty inflicted on Him as a “human being” and not a “divine being”. What gave Him the ability to do this was His *faith* and *trust* in His Heavenly Father. It was His belief, probably developed in childhood because of the faith of His parents and grandparents, in the goodness of God that gave Him the power to respond in the way that He did.

We all can develop a faith as strong as His if we only desire to have such a faith and we work at placing our hope and trust in God. It is a cope-out to think or say that we are unable to imitate Jesus and the way that He lived His life.

(Continued on page 8)

A PRAYER A DAY FOR THE 2021 GREAT FAST

MONDAY, MARCH 8th

Heavenly Father, as I look upon the Cross of Your Son Jesus, which the Church held up before me this weekend, I am overwhelmed with the thought of Your great love for me. You spared nothing to teach me how to live this human life - to live as Your adopted child. There is nothing I can literally do to thank you enough for this revelation. I'm aware that Jesus experienced all that I must experience. To think that You were willing to go to such extremes, makes me aware of how important it is that I live, for my own sake, the way that You revealed through Jesus. I offer my sincerest thanks and I ask this of You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

TUESDAY, MARCH 9th

Heavenly Father, the Church, in her infinite wisdom, made it quite clear in the way She presented Jesus' Cross this weekend, that the way I lead my life can result in experiencing the fullness of life. She conveyed this by presenting the Cross encased in flowers. When I nobly embrace the challenges of life, I experience life. This teaches me that the way I meet the challenges of my life is important. It calls me to meet even the most severe challenges with *faith* and *trust* in You, my Father - it teaches me that You do not desire my death and punishment but a relationship with me. Help me to truly embrace this thought. I ask this of You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10th

Heavenly Father help me to keep my eyes fixed on Jesus. Help me to dismiss any tendency to think that I can't live like He did, namely with *faith* and *trust* in You. It is so clear to me, as I look upon His Cross, that the one desire Jesus had was to bring honor and praise to You. He did this by the way that He lived. Help me to desire to bring You praise and honor as He did by my willingness to make every attempt to live like He lived, that is with unconditional love for all. Help me to truly believe that with His help I can live as He did. I ask this of You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

THURSDAY, MARCH 11th

Heavenly Father, I realize that we have just passed the mid-point of the Great Fast. I ask Your help to continue my attempts to constantly place myself in Your presence and transform myself truly into the person You imagined when You created me. I know that I can do this if I embrace the way Jesus lived and grow in His likeness. When I learn to unconditionally love others because I believe they are also the Temples of Your Spirit, I know that I grow ever closer to have a truly good relationship with You. To see You constantly in Your creation, especially in other persons, I grow in my awareness of Your presence. I ask this of You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

A PRAYER A DAY FOR THE 2021 GREAT FAST

FRIDAY, MARCH 12th

Heavenly Father, as I offer this prayer to You, I cannot believe that we are quickly ending the fourth week of the Great Fast. I would ask You to help me strengthen my efforts to observe this special and holy time. I realize that the Church has called me, during this week, to focus on the sacrifice of Your Son on the Cross. His Cross tells me that You, through Him, truly know what we humans experience. He died to reveal to me that there is life after death, therefore, alleviating my fears of death. Through Him You truly have expressed Your awareness of typical human fears and so He died to relieve my fears. I ask this of You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

SATURDAY, MARCH 13th

Heavenly Father, the Church again calls me to remember those who have go on before me. Help me to truly believe they are alive in Your Kingdom and continue to love me as You do. As I pray for their repose, fortify me in my belief that there is life after death and that You have granted me eternal life, not because of any of my own merits, but because You love me as Your child. I believe You grant eternal life to all humans out of Your love for us and, being Temples of Your Own Spirit, You have called us to an eternal relationship with You. Help me to believe and understand this. I ask this of You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

SUNDAY, MARCH 14th

Heavenly Father, this weekend the Church calls me to remember Saint John Climacus, one of the Fathers of the Eastern Church. He presented a unique way to look at spiritual development, suggesting that one virtue builds on another and that the virtues are like the rungs of a ladder which helps me make my way to heaven. He suggested that there are 30 steps in all, and it was called the Ladder of Divine Ascent. He suggested that the pinnacle of the Ladder, the summit of virtue, is LOVE. I beg Your help in learning to unconditionally love all others so that I may truly be able to receive Your unconditional love in its fullness. I ask this of You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

THOUGHTS AND IDEAS

There are so many different ways a person can observe the Great Fast. The most important things are: to freely choose to do something that you believe will help you spiritually grow and that you would not usually do. Remember, God does not need us to “give up things”. If we give up things it is all about building personal discipline to attend to the change of attitudes and behaviors. God will not love you any more or any less if you don’t “fast”, say, from meat. If you fast from meat, it is all about trying to remind yourself that life is a journey of change leading back to the Father.

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, March 7 - Third Weekend of the Great Fast - Tone 7
10:00 AM - Special Intention - Live Streamed

4th WEEK OF THE GREAT FAST - Tone 8

Monday, March 8 - Theophylact, Bishop-Confessor
No Service Scheduled

Tuesday, March 9 - 40 Martyrs of Sebaste
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday, March 10 - Condratus & Others, Martyrs
No Service Scheduled

Thursday, March 11 - Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem
No Service Scheduled

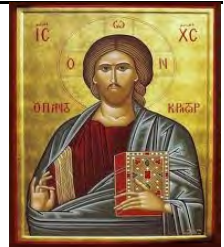
Friday, March 12 - Theophane, Venerable-Confessor
7:00 PM - Presanctified Liturgy - Live Streamed

Saturday, March 13 - Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople
No Service Scheduled

Sunday, March 14 - Fourth Weekend of the Great Fast - Tone 8
10:00 AM - Special Intention - Live Streamed

(Continued from page 5 - Living The New Life)

As I have looked at my own life, I have come to realize that anytime I say that I cannot be like Jesus it is because (1) I'm afraid to change - I know who I am right now; (2) I am tired and lazy and don't want to work at becoming more like Jesus; and (3) I convince myself that Jesus was only able to live the way that He did because He was also God. This, of course, flies in the face of our dogma about Christ. His divine nature did not dictate to His human nature how to live. The declared it a heresy to think that the man Jesus was controlled by God incarnate, the Son. God purposely became incarnate to be able to imitate for us how to live as humans in order to accomplish what God intended when He created humans, namely to have beings who might freely return His love. I know that many would like it to be true that we cannot imitate Jesus, but it is not true. It may only be a result of laziness.



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

THEOSIS: THE WORK OF LIFE AND THE GREAT FAST

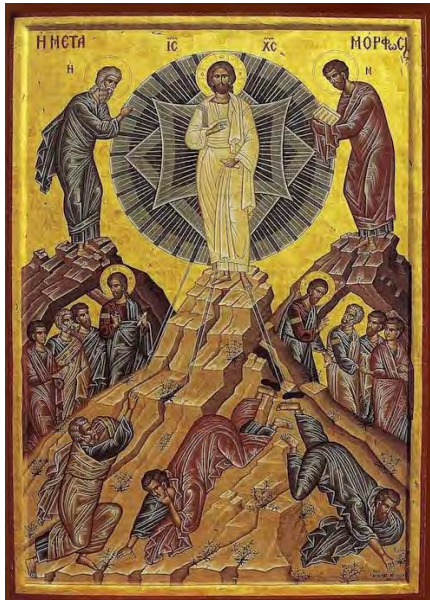
In this article I am attempting to lay out the framework for the systematic cultivation of *theosis* for the sake of connection comprehension with clarity of application. Hopefully what I will present are the basics of theory and practice and the logic of their connection so that any of my readers who desire to embrace a life which includes the work of *theosis*, can faithfully understand and apply themselves to the “upward call” with all earnestness of endeavor. We are called to this work during this lifetime. I urge anyone who desires all that God has revealed to them through the Person of Jesus, to not read but also apply themselves to the exercise of *theosis*. This is truly the Eastern Church’s approach to personal spirituality.

St. Peter wrote this: *gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”* (1 Peter 1:13-16)

In other words, grace, effort and holiness are a unity. And since holiness of conduct is not a matter of the outward dimension of man only, but also and especially of the inward man.

Sunk in their outward senses, the practical problem for humans is that they are immersed, or rather submersed in the passions. This mode of being is grounded in what might be called sensoriality, which is to say that the human condition of confusing practically the phenomenal realm with ultimate reality. Humans are created with a capacity and desire for the infinite enjoyment of the Triune God, but, in their limited, unchanged human condition, they seek rather for infinite pleasure in, and fulfillment from, the material world.

In order words, we humans tend to live in a way that pleases our senses. God, however, so created us in this fashion so that we might have opportunities to change and then freely return His love. He created us with “free will”. He does not desire to “compel” us to return His love but, rather gives us multiple opportunities to grow in our desire to return His love and grow in union with Him.



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN TODAY?



	Earlier Paradigm	Emerging Paradigm
<i>The Bible's Origin</i>	A divine product with divine authority	A human response to God
<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>	Literal-factual	Historical and metaphorical
<i>The Bible's Function</i>	Revelation of doctrine and morals	Metaphorical and sacramental
<i>Christian life emphasis</i>	An afterlife and what to believe or do to be saved	Transformation in this life through relationship with God

I am quite aware that this article may be one of the more difficult articles to follow. I am purposely sharing this in order to stimulate “thought” among my readers.

So different are the two views of Christianity that they almost produce two different religions, both using the same Bible and language. Our time of two paradigms is virtually a tale of two Christianities. That is why I have provided the small chart above.

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, a subtraction. Letting go of the notion that the Bible is a divine product seems to call its authority into question. Being relatively indifferent to whether the virgin birth and empty tomb are historical facts seems to call the divinity of Jesus and the wonder-working power of God into question. Letting go of the utter uniqueness of Jesus and the necessity of believing in

Him as the only way of salvation seems to call Christianity itself into question. Can one let go of any or all of this and still be Christian?

From the emerging paradigm’s point of view, the earlier paradigm seems anti-intellectual and rigidly (but selectively) moralistic. Its insistence on biblical literalism makes little sense, as does its rejection of science whenever it conflicts with literalism. Advocates of the emerging paradigm are particularly perplexed and often impatient with the earlier paradigm’s subordination of women, its negative attitude toward non-Christians and its preoccupation with conservative political issues rather than issues of justice. It seems to emphasize personal righteousness more than compassion and justice. And its exclusivism, its rejection of other religions as adequate or worse, is unacceptable. How can it be that God is known in only one religion? We too often try to put God in a box that we have created. It doesn’t work.



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

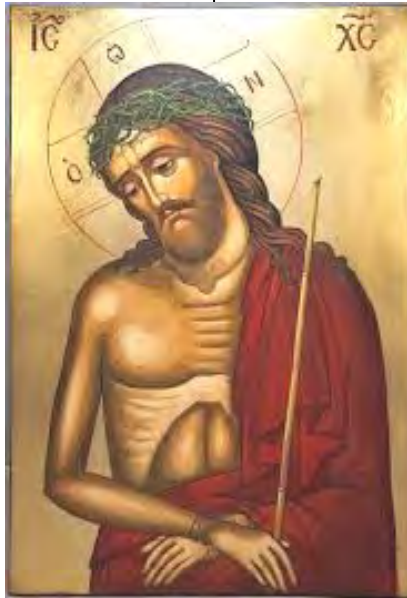
The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, STL, Ph.D.
Vol. 68 No 10 3rd Weekend Of The Great Fast March 6-7, 2021

SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND INNER HEALING

While it is true that “Jesus is without sin”, it is also true that He “has been tempted in every way that we are”, that He suffered much and “offered up prayer and entreaty, aloud and in silent tears” and that “he submitted so humbly ... and learned to obey through suffering. Surely, while He is fully and completely God, He is fully and completely human, and so understands far better than we would like to admit what it means to be tempted, under trial, disappointed, lonely, hurt, upset, angry, and betrayed. “For it is not as if we had a high priest who was incapable of feeling our weaknesses with us”; no, Jesus understands all too well the limitations and pain of human existence - both His and ours. If we want to see a life in which more human suffering occurred than in any other, all we need to do is read the Gospels. Anyway, is not our sin often our way to attempt to avoid

the suffering to which the process of spiritual growth calls us?

Jesus understands our weakness for He has experienced temptations to moral weakness in His own life; He also found Himself physically helpless, especially during His Passion. And He has lived through our weakness with us. As we approach Him through the Scriptures we have no need to fear Him (unless we are afraid of the truth) nor can we prejudge Him to be insensitive to our lives (unless we want to say that the Scriptures lie, that He is not a full human being, and that



He does not love us). Praying to see ourselves in the events of Christ’s life is a way to come to know the truth of Jesus, to Whom we want to draw close, so that we can live in the way that He did, that is, by His attitudes and behaviors and in so doing know the truth that will set us free. We are called by God to imitate Jesus.

The Cross, Our Victory

Have you seen the wonderful victory? Have you seen the splendid deeds of the Cross? ... Who can tell the Lord's mighty deeds? By death we were made immortal: these are the glorious deeds of the Cross.

Have you understood the victory? Have you grasped how it was wrought? Learn now, how this victory was gained without any sweat or toil of ours. No weapons of ours were stained with blood; our feet did not stand in the front line of battle; we suffered no wounds; witnessed no tumults; and yet we obtained the victory.

The battle was the Lord's, the crown is ours. Since then victory is ours, let us imitate the soldiers, and with joyful voices sing the songs of victory.

Let us praise the Lord and say, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?"

The Cross did all these wonderful things for us: the Cross is a war memorial erected against the demons, a sword against sin, the sword with which Christ slew the serpent.

The Cross is the Father's will, the glory of the Only-begotten, the Spirit's exultation, the beauty of the angels, the guardian of the Church. Paul glories in the Cross; it is the rampart of the saints, it is the light of the whole world.

St. John Chrysostom