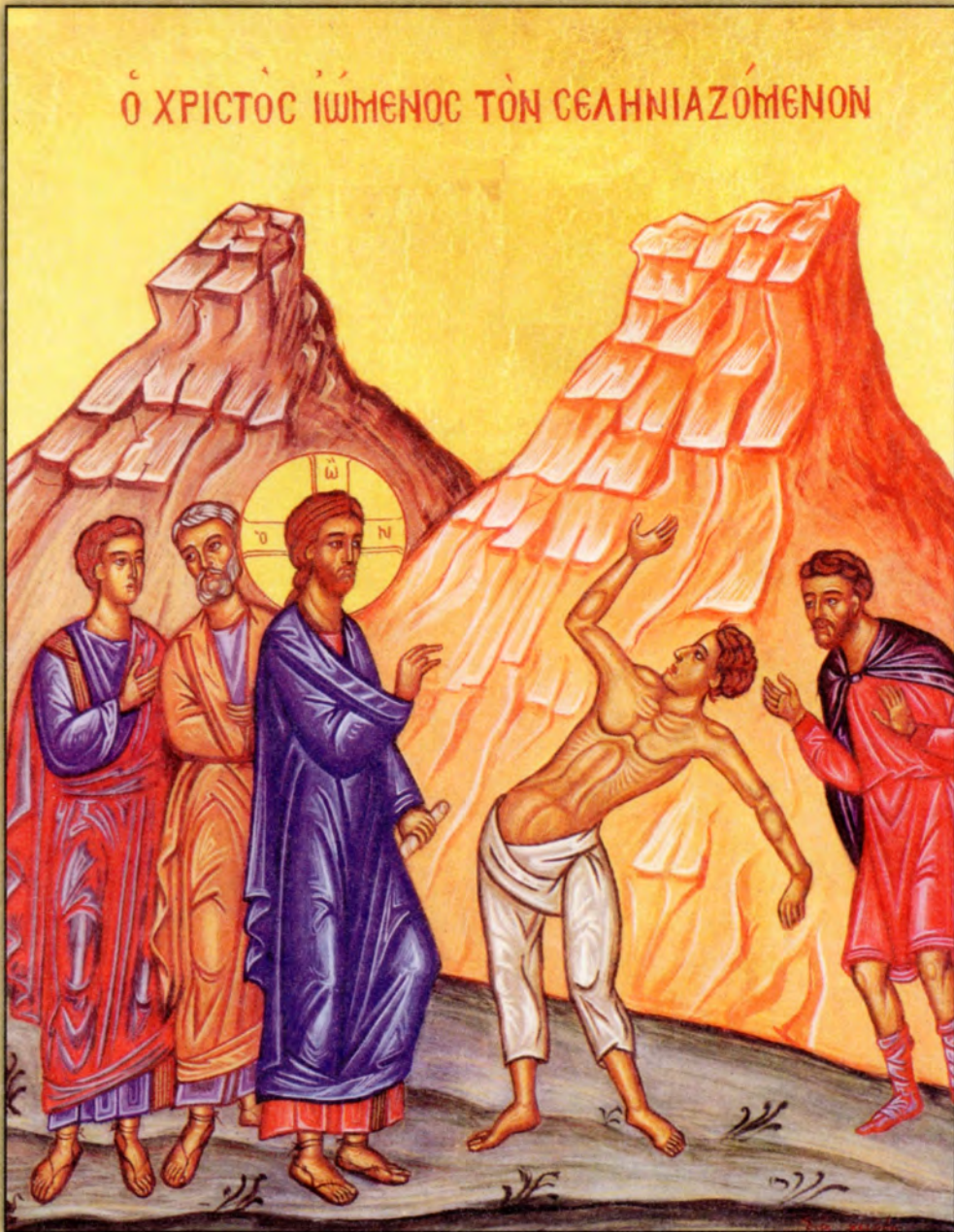


FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST
SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN CLIMACUS

Ὁ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ἰῶμενος τὸν σεληνιαζόμενον



Icon of Healing the Boy with a Demon

A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this 4th weekend of the Great Fast, the Church would have us remember our Father among the Saints, St. John Climacus and listen to readings from both Paul's Letter to the Hebrews and Mark's Gospel. In his letter to the Hebrews, Paul shares with them and us that he truly believes that God has made Jesus a High Priest for us, that is someone who can represent us before God and offer, on our behalf, praise to God. This is something that we truly affirm each and every time that we offer the Divine Liturgy. We join with Jesus and offer praise to God by offering our thanksgiving for the gift of life that God is sharing with us. This theme truly resounds throughout the writings of our Father John Climacus.

The Gospel we hear is about the cure of a possessed boy that the apostles were unable to cure. Jesus' response to the inability of the apostles to cure the boy was that such actions can only happen by "prayer".

As we come ever nearer to the Great and Holy Week, we are reminded that the events we will celebrate see Jesus as our High Priest and that with prayer we may come to realize what we must do in order to praise God.

What must we do? It is not by keeping laws and rules. It is by offering to God true praise and honor. This is achieved by joining ourselves with our Brother Jesus and offering to God true thanksgiving for the gift of life. To do this, we must offer to return the gift of



life to Him. We do this by making Him the sole ruler of our life. We embrace a way of living that says that we believe in our loving Father and sincerely try to do everything in our power to bring Him praise and glory.

Again, how do we do this? By committing ourselves to the Jesus Way of living. This means that we truly commit ourselves to learning how to unconditionally love all others. This means that we place no conditions on our love. This means that regardless of how others may treat us, we are committed to only LOVE THEM. As you can guess, this requires work on our part and to base our response to others on our faith!

THE ICON OF THE GREAT FAST

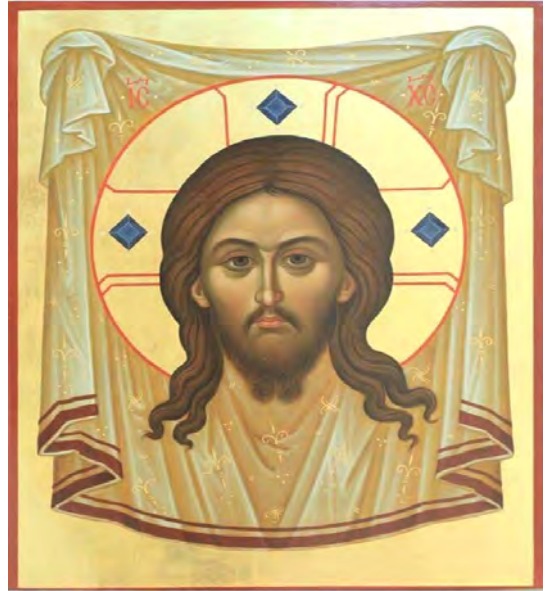
This is the last installment of the history of the Icon written without human hands, one of the true icons of the Great Fast.

What then happened to the cloth is not explained in *The Avenging of the Savior* nor in the retellings in *The Death of Pilate* and the Golden Legend. But a cloth with a face purporting to be Christ's was an object of veneration in Rome from at least the beginning of the 8th century, when John VII had an altar constructed for it in St. Peter's. In the 13th century, Innocent III organized a procession with the cloth and had a hymn written to honor the "Holy Face impressed on a kerchief whiter than snow and given to Veronica as a sign of love."

Did the veil of St. Veronica really exist? Yes! A document from the Iconoclast Period has been found pertaining to her veil being transported from Byzantium to Rome by St. Germanos I in 708.

Where is St. Veronica's Veil now? Herein lie some of the complexities surrounding the current existence of the Veil of St. Veronica. There are eye-witness accounts made by pilgrims visiting the Vatican in Rome where the Veil of St. Veronica was kept inside the old St. Peter's Basilica (which was built by the Emperor Constantine) until the year 1600 A.D when construction began on the new basilica.

According to one Eastern Christian article, the cloth known as *Veronica's*



Veil, is still the precious property of the Roman Catholic Church and has been placed in a hallowed corner of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, where it is put on display the second Sunday after Epiphany, four days during Holy Week, Easter Sunday, the Monday after Easter, Monday of Pentecost, February 22, May 3, and November 18 of each year, as well as on other special occasions." But others disagree with this and say that *The Veronica*, as the Catholics call the veil, is in the Capuchin Church in Manoppello, Italy. However, the Greeks in Jerusalem claim possession of the Veil of Veronica 1867.

Whether of not the Veronica truly exists, we have an icon of it that helps us to image Christ, especially at this special time of the year. Truly a very fascinating story.

THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

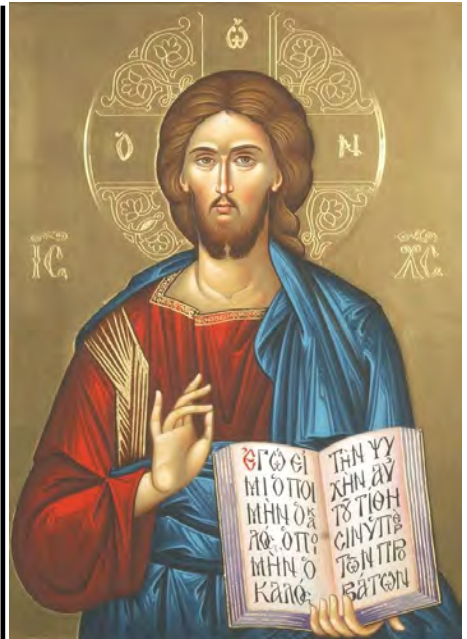
This has truly been a challenging and fascinating article to present. Since many have asked, what at the fruits - the benefits - of a spiritual life, I've tried to answer that question.

When we attempt to develop a spiritual life, we begin to see an entirely different side of our lives. We are not just physical and sensual beings but, rather, that we have a spiritual dimension to us. We have the ability to reflect upon our place in the universe and to see ourselves as spiritual beings.

What does it mean to be a spiritual being? It means that I can go beyond the physical limitations of my human nature and “ponder upon the big questions of life.” I can get in touch with some of my powers as a human being, namely, my ability to imagine, to think, to create and to have true feelings of love. It means that I see that I am not limited to just my “natural instincts” and “natural feelings” but that I can actually begin to see those things that actually influence my life. I can encounter my ability to abstractly think and reflect, that is to think about things and to come to some conclusions that are strictly my own.

This all starts with me actually thinking that (1) I am a spiritual as well as a physical being, and (2) that the things beyond my physical perception can be just as true and real as those that I experience through my senses (*I hope this makes some sense to my readers*). Reality is not just that which I can touch and feel. There is much more to human life than the physical world.

Once I make this decision, I can truly begin to sense the reality of God and the reality of human life. There is something more to life than just those things that I can sense through my five senses. There is a whole world beyond



this physical world - the world of the spirit (*again this is based on my awareness that I am much more than just those things that I can sense*).

Once I reach this level of awareness, earthly life totally changes! I am more than just this earthly body. I am more than just this earthly life. I am an “eternal being” that God has created out of love and that He has destined me to spend an eternity with Him.

Such beliefs and thoughts can rescue us from some of the “defeatist thoughts about this life” and are the true fruits of the spiritual life. It relaxes us to be free in this world and to enjoy it.

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:

wruhgy@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.

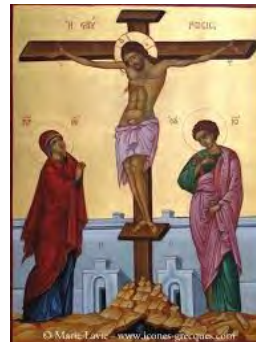
EASTER FLOWERS

We will be decorating our Church with Easter Flowers this year so we will be accepting donations for Floral Memorials. Be sure you include the names of those for whom you wish us to pray.

It is my hope to have a finalized Great and Holy Week Schedule by next week.

LIVING THE NEW LIFE

I know that I keep talking about the fact that we are called by God, through Jesus Christ, to embrace a process of personal change. I also know that most people find “change” a very



difficult process. I recently came across a recently came across a book which is entitled: TINY HABITS, The Small Changes that Change Everything. The basic premise of the book is that you cannot ever make “big changes” successfully and that you have to first engage in making “small changes.” I am going to attempt to adapt this approach to the spiritual changes that we are called to make. The research that the author B.J. Fogg, PhD presents indicates that if we engage in making “small or tiny changes” first, we can ultimately successfully accomplish larger changes. So in the coming weeks, I would like to share with my readers how to use this approach to accomplish spiritual change. I think that it has real potential for spiritual growth, although it wasn't designed for such a process. I will put my thoughts

(Continued on page 8)

A PRAYER A DAY FOR THE 2021 GREAT FAST

MONDAY, MARCH 15th

Heavenly Father, I sense that the Great Fast is quickly coming to an end and I'm not sure that I have spiritually benefited from it to the degree that is possible. I ask You to help my double my efforts during these remaining days to make this a special time. I truly want to be prepared for the celebration of Your Son's Resurrection. I need Your help in accomplishing this. Help me to make these days true days of spiritual growth. Help me to reflect upon what I must do to spiritually grow and then to do it. Help me to be sincere in this effort. Help me to desire to live as Jesus lived. I ask this of You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

TUESDAY, MARCH 16th

Heavenly Father, this week I remember, in accord with the Church, that God sent His Son into the world to redeem us and to reveal to us the way to live this human life. We come into this world devoid of an understanding of life and what we are to accomplish during this life. God revealed to us, through Jesus, life's meaning. We are here to learn how to be children of God. We are here to learn what it means to be a spiritual being. We are given opportunities to learn this, I truly believe, through life experiences. Life allows us to come to an understanding of its meaning. Help me of any unbelief. I ask this of You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17th

Heavenly Father, the image of Your Son's Cross, so wonderfully presented by the Church last weekend, remains in my memory. The horrible tool of death and cruelty embedded in flowers. What a wonderful symbol. The Cross was Your Son's greatest challenge. The way that He embraced the Cross was so uplifting, modeling for me the way to meet the difficult challenges of my life. I cannot thank You enough for allowing me to share in this religion which tells me that You, through Your Son, know what I, a human, face in life. Through Jesus You share in all my life's challenges and are here helping me to learn from these challenges. May I ever be thankful. I thank You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

THURSDAY, MARCH 18th

Heavenly Father, our Church celebrates the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete. In it he directs me to pray: "The season of the Fast helps me to perform the world of God. Let me weep, then, with my whole heart and cry to my Savior: through Your disciples, O Lord, save me who with fear sing the praises of Your great love for humankind". He also has me pray: "Look upon me with a compassionate eye and be merciful to me, O Savior. Grant to my poor soul springs of healing water". May his words truly be my words, Heavenly Father. Help my desire to spiritually grow. I thank You for all that You have done for me and who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

A PRAYER A DAY FOR THE 2021 GREAT FAST

FRIDAY, MARCH 19th

Heavenly Father, I would again pray with the words of our father among the Saints, Andrew of Crete, saying: "Strengthen my soul, O Master, that it may run to You and ever serve You. For You are my guardian and protection, my defense and assistance. Enable me, O Father, to cry to You with boldness: Before I perish utterly, save me O God". I join my prayer also with St. Mary of Egypt and say: "Give me the light of grace, from Your providence on high, that I may flee from the darkness of the passions and sing fervently the joyful story of life". In praying this, I ask Your help to be thankful for this life. I thank You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

SATURDAY, MARCH 20th

This day, Heavenly Father, our Church calls us to pray the Akathistos Hymn to the Mother of God. In it we pray: "Today is revealed the mystery that is from all eternity. The Son of God becomes the Son of Man, that, sharing in what is worse, He may make me share in what is better. Of old Adam sought to become God but failed. Now God becomes man, that He may make Adam god. Let creation rejoice, let nature exult for the Archangel stands in fear before the Virgin and with his salutation brings the joyful greeting whereby our sorrow is healed. O God, Who in Your merciful compassion was made man, glory be to You." I thank You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

SUNDAY, MARCH 21st

Heavenly Father, on this fifth weekend of the Fast the Church remembers Mary of Egypt. We pray: "The desires of your soul and the passions of your flesh you cut down with abstinence. Your sinful thoughts you choked with the silence of your self-denying life. With the streams of your tears, you watered all the wilderness and caused the fruits of repentance to spring up for us. Therefore, O saint, we celebrate your memory". Heavenly Father, You have given me so many examples of how people have grown in their likeness of Your Son Jesus. Help me to learn from them so that I might truly, spiritually grow. I thank You for all that You have done for me and who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

GREAT AND HOLY WEEK

This year we will be celebrating Great and Holy Week with some changes. I will be sharing our plans over the coming weeks. We will bless Pussy Willows and, if you don't attend the service but would like to obtain a blessed branch, they will be available outside the church building in the parking lot after Liturgy.

Currently it is my plan to have a shortened Great and Good Friday Vesper service and a shorten Easter Sunday Resurrection Matins. There will be blessing of food in the Church proper and not in the social hall. Will fill in details in the coming weeks.

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, March 14 - Fourth Weekend of the Great Fast - Tone 8
10:00 AM + Michael Winek; Irene Winek - Live Streamed

5th WEEK OF THE GREAT FAST - Tone 1

Monday, March 15 - Agapius & Others, Martyrs
No Service Scheduled

Tuesday, March 16 - Sabinus & Papas, Martyrs
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday, March 17 - Alexis, Man of God, Venerable
No Service Scheduled

Thursday, March 18 - Anbdrew of Crete
No Service Scheduled

Friday, March 19 - Chrysanthus & Daria, Martyrs
7:00 PM - Presanctified Liturgy - Live Streamed

Saturday, March 20 - Fathers of St. Sabbas Monastery
No Service Scheduled

Sunday, March 21 - Fifth Weekend of the Great Fast - Tone 1
10:00 AM + John Winek; Irene Winek - Live Streamed

(Continued from page 5 - Living The New Life)

on one of the other pages. I truly believe this approach has great potential for helping people make the personal changes that are needed if they are to spiritually grow. Of course we will see if I can successfully adapt this process to our spiritual endeavors.



Have no doubt. All of us have some need for personal change in order to become more like Jesus. It is all a matter of deciding what we really believe we need to change and then to systematically apply ourselves to making some change in that area. Do not fool yourself. Spiritual growth takes time and effort. It doesn't come naturally, that is for sure.

Spiritual change includes "change in attitudes" and "change in behaviors." For example, if I am a person prone to worrying, this will surely thwart my spiritual growth. I can't worry and still be more like Jesus. He did not worry, even about losing His life. Hopefully my attempts will help.

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

THEOSIS: THE WORK OF LIFE AND THE GREAT FAST

In the process of *Theosis* it is thus essential not to linger “on what is easiest, the visible and external,” not falling into the trap of observing “with the utmost correctness all the formal and outward rules for devout conduct” while paying “little or no attention to the inward movements of the heart,” but instead to enter into the practice of heeding “the play of thoughts in the heart.”

Untransformed humans treat their five senses as a kind of *telos* such that their root desire for pleasure, an infinite desire originally created to be fulfilled in God, is now bound up with pleasant sensations and feelings. Humans are on a constant hunt for pleasurable sensory experience.

St. Nicodemos gives two reasons for man’s predicament. To paraphrase these two reasons. The first and main reason is that our bodies receive the whole of their existence and constitution from physical pleasure that is impassioned and irrational and the second reason, is that humans are nurtured with physical pleasure.

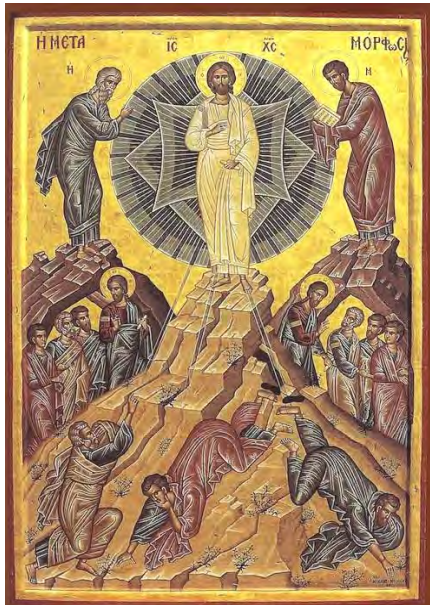
By pleasurable sensation is meant such things as pleasant sights, sounds, smells, touches. These pleasant

sensations, in turn, produce pleasant feelings and then pleasant moods. Since the physical world cannot provide such a ceaseless flow of pleasurable sensations, however, humans are immediately thrust by reality into a sense of a lack of pleasure, with its consequent dissatisfaction and necessary misery.

Given this situation, that is why the Church has always suggested that spiritual growth only comes about

when we discipline our approach to personal change. One spiritual author has written this: *Desire and distress subsist in the soul; sensual pleasure and pain in the body. Sensual pleasure gives rise to pain, and pain to sensual pleasure for, wanting to escape the wearisome feeling of pain, we take refuge in sensual pleasure; which desire results in distress.*

Personal change never is achieved without a struggle. Life presents us with challenges so that we can achieve personal transformation. One of the challenges is to moderate our personal lives, dealing intelligently with desire, distress, sensual pleasure and pain. When we do this, we begin to spiritually grow. Jesus showed us the truth of this matter.



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN TODAY?

In this article I have been sharing with you what Christianity has meant in the past and what it is emerging to mean. This has happened in all the ages past. As society changes, so our ideas about religion and life changes. What does Christianity mean TODAY. Christianity should not and cannot be the same today as it was in the time of Christ. Why? Because we have come to a deeper and much more logical understanding who Christ is. The Church has, for centuries, wrestled with her understanding of Jesus, the Christ,

I would have you recall that in the time after Christ, there was no awareness of Him as God incarnate. It took almost three centuries before the Church really and truly recognized Him as both God and Man. It took a number of heresies to bring the Church to this awareness.

So there has definitely been a change in the Church's understanding of Who Jesus is over time. We truly believe that this understanding has been guided by God's Holy Spirit. Our ideas, the Church admits, have to change as we become more and more aware of the implications of God's message to us through Jesus Christ. God's message to us becomes an evermore challenging and in-depth message for us. It truly takes into

consideration our understanding of our human ability to comprehend the message.

Again consider this. It took more than three centuries to decide that Jesus was both God and Man and that His Godhead did not dictate how His humanity would respond to the challenges of life. We believe that He was not motivated to respond to the challenges of His life by His Godhead

but, rather, by His human faith in God, His Heavenly Father - a faith that was supported by the faith of His mother, Mary, and His family (*i.e., Joseph, Joachim and Anna and others within His family*).

Jesus we truly believe grew as a regular human being like us. He developed a deep faith in

the Heavenly Father and lived in accord with that belief.

This, I believe, is a critical part of our belief. History has shown us that believing Christ to be anything but human in the way He lived, truly makes it impossible for us to live like Him. Although He was also God, He lived as a human being. Therefore we can live like Him. It is all related to our intent and our desire.

So I would ask you, do you want to live like Jesus Christ? You have the power to do this if you place your reliance on God's Spirit within you.





THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, STL, Ph.D.
Vol. 68 No 11 4th Weekend Of The Great Fast March 13-14, 2021

SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND INNER HEALING

We begin our prayer to see ourselves in the events of Christ's life in the same way we begin any prayer for healing of memories - by asking the Lord's guidance to help us identify a memory that He wants to heal now. Therefore, we pray for guidance, we talk with a friend, we journalize, we review our lives. Truly most importantly, we are constantly asking the Holy Spirit to be in charge of the process by which memories are released from our unconscious minds into our consciousness. By allowing the Spirit to be in charge in this way we are assured that He is the origin of the healing we will experience, and we will also be protected from the bumbling ways that we or others have of probing into our minds on our own looking for areas that need healing.

Next, we ask the Lord to show us when He faced a similar situation in His own life, either in an event He lived or in a story He told. If at this point we

remain silent for awhile and wait for Jesus to answer our prayer, we will often be surprised how a story from Scripture will suddenly come into our minds or we will open our bible to a story that will help us to pray. If we are seeking healing for a destructive memory in our lives and we cannot immediately identify with a story from any other part of Jesus' life, usually in the accounts of His Passion and Death, we will find a scene in which we can identify with His pain and weakness.



As we find a scene from Christ's life that relates to our need, we may want to look it up in the Gospels to help us to be accurate in our account of the details. Often when we do this, we are surprised by one or another detail that we had forgotten, but that has special poignancy in our situation.

This is difficult to comprehend. These are suggestions to enhance spiritual growth. Will you try them?

Journeying to Pascha

Jesus continues today his work of healing and exorcism, and that is appropriate for this time of Lent, because Lent is a time for healing and exorcism. It is a time for us to heal the wounds of our souls – self-inflicted wounds due to our complacency and laziness and self-indulgence. It is time to get rid of those demons of our own sinful habits and anything that keeps us away from God and from living that abundant life that Christ came to give us.

We start to make our way toward Jerusalem. At the end of today's Gospel already there is the prediction of the passion, the death and the resurrection of Christ, giving a little hint in the Gospel that the course of Lent is moving now towards Jerusalem. We have gone through several weeks now of spiritual preparations, Scripture texts, prayers and activities. Now our focus

is starting to turn towards Jerusalem. That will be made more explicit in next Sunday's Gospel, but we are already getting a hint of it now.

There are only three weeks now until Easter, two weeks until Palm Sunday, when we are really liturgically accompanying Christ into the mystery of His Passion.

So it is coming soon, and we have to start turning towards Jerusalem. We have to get focused, we have to get recollected, we have to really revive our Lenten prayer and fasting so that we can make the rest of this journey and be fruitful and overcome the demons and find healing for the wounds of our souls – and go with Christ to his Passion and, through the mystery of His Cross, come to that great, transfiguring, glorious celebration of His Resurrection.