

SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC MAN

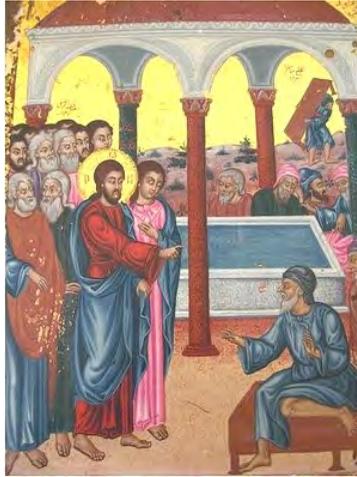


*Icon of Jesus Healing the Paralytic Man*

## A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

As we begin this fourth week of our celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus, our readings are again taken from the ACTS, the history of the early Church, and John's Gospel. The passage we hear from ACTS tells us about the activity of Peter, seen as the head of the Church, after the Resurrection of Christ. In this account, Peter acts just like Jesus, he cures a man of paralysis and raises Tabitha from the dead. What this tells us is that God, in His desire to continue the ministry of Jesus in the world, allows others, like Peter, to continue some of the miraculous works in the world to reinforce the truth revealed by the Father through Jesus, namely that life and death are just a part of life and how we live this life impacts what transpires after death. The next life may be a repetition of the lessons that we did not learn during this present life. Each life we live in the eternal cycle either has us repeat the things that we did not learn or moves us on to a higher level, whatever this means.

Our Gospel story is about the cure of a paralytic man at the Sheep Pool in Jerusalem. What immediately strikes me is that the cure again happens on the Sabbath. The Sabbath, which was Saturday for the Jewish People and Sunday for Christian People, is a "holy"



day - a day on which we remember the Lord our God in a very special way. Its foundation is based on the Genesis story that God created for six days and that, on the seventh day He rested. A special day.

It must always be remembered that in the Eastern Church we truly regard both Saturdays and Sundays as "special days."

We have not given up the traditions of our ancestors, who were Jewish, but embrace both new and old traditions.

What does it mean to be released from "paralysis" on the Sabbath? Paralysis comes from "doubt" or "uncertainty"! Doubt and uncertainty are so natural for humans. We believe deeply when we are not challenged. When challenged, it is easy to fall into doubt and uncertainty.

Perhaps this is one of the important spiritual growth factors we must face. It is important NOT TO DOUBT when we are confronted by challenges that can "test" our ability to accept life as it is given to us. It is simple to believe when there are no challenges. Where is our belief when we are challenged?

This is truly the paralysis that Jesus attempts to cure - the paralysis of our unbelief in times of challenge. He tells us that He is with us during these times and can help us, if we believe. It is for us to TRUST!

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

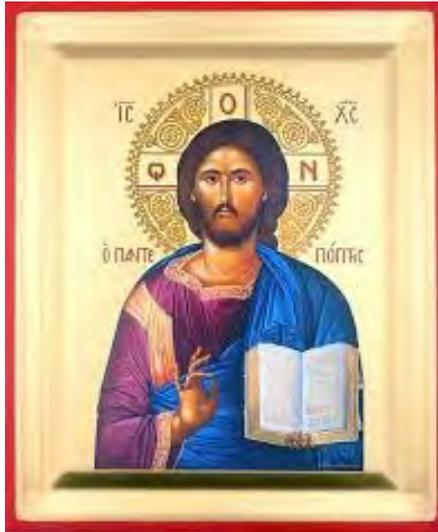
This has been an interesting and very challenging article to write. Although I am combining my thoughts with an author, Marcus Borg, I add my own particular thoughts and simple commentary.

FAITH is at the heart of Christianity. Its centrality goes back to the New Testament. All but two of its 27 books use the noun “faith” or the verb “believe”. But, in essence, faith is all about belief in things that cannot be documented or proven.

What is faith? Faith has a twofold definition. It is defined as “complete trust or confidence in someone or a strong belief in God or in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual apprehension rather than proof”. Faith says that I hold these things to be true which I cannot prove. Why? Because I am moved by the Spirit within me to embrace these things as truth. Why me? I don’t know. I only know that I am truly very thankful. These beliefs fulfill my life and give it meaning.

Moreover, the New Testament gives it crucial significance. Jesus spoke of it often, making statements such as “You faith has made you well.” For Paul, we are “justified” - that is, made right with God - “by grace through faith.”

I think that we must stop and reflect



on these words. It is by the “help of God” and our own desire to truly understand the real meaning and purpose of life, that we can achieve an answer. The road to true understanding of life is always a very cooperative road of relationship between us and God. We cannot do it alone, that is without God’s help. But we must always remember and

believe that God said that He would always be there for us, helping us as we need His help. Our becoming a true Christian is a cooperative act between us and God.

In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, one of the letters of Paul, the Jewish Bible becomes a story of faith. The author of Hebrews extols its heroes as having lived by faith. “By faith, Noah...By faith, Abraham... “through Moses and unnamed people, climaxing with Jesus, the “pioneers and perfecter of our faith.”

Probably the most widely known Bible verse emphasizes the important of belief. To quote John 3:16 in the language of the bible “For God so loved the world that he gave His only-begotten Son that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The Church repeatedly states these words. Do we truly believe them?

# ST BASIL THE GREAT AND THOUGHTS ON GENESIS

I ended this article in last week's Bulletin with sharing thoughts about Cain who, after killing Abel, became a wandering fugitive with no family to back him up and avenge him. Cain was left with no such protection. Anyone could slay him at will with complete impunity.

God insists that this is not so. He Himself will fulfill the role of avenger of blood for Cain, and He assures him that if anyone kills him, vengeance will be taken on him seven-fold (i.e., fully and abundantly). Cain was indeed banished, but he had not forfeited the real protection of God. In fulfillment of His promise, Yahweh appointed a sign for Cain, lest any who found him should kill him.

Much scholarly ink has been spilled on this sign. The Authorized King James Version renders the phrase, "the Lord set a mark upon Cain," with the result that it was popularly considered that one could recognize a murderer by his face, because he "bore the mark of Cain." Obviously such a mark in this instance would have resulted not in Cain's protection but in his doom. The Hebrew here for sign is *oth*, the word used in Exodus 4:8; 10:2, and Psalm

78:43 to denote a miraculous event. Accordingly we may here interpret the appointing of a sign for Cain as God's promise that should Cain ever be threatened, He would manifest Himself in some way so as to convince the would-be assailants that Cain was under His protection. Despite his crime, God would serve as Cain's avenger of blood and provide this protection.



The sentence was promptly carried out. Cain went away from the face of Yahweh (i.e., he left the courtroom of God's presence) and dwelt in the land of wandering (Hebrew *nod*). The term "the land of Nod" does not denote a territory named "Nod" or "wandering," but simply that now Cain's homeland was one of exile and banishment. He who was to be *na'*

and *nad* (Verse 12) now dwelt in *nod*, his own place. The land is described as east of Eden - far away from their first Paradise and experience of God's presence.

Genesis is such an interesting story. It is not, however, history. Frequently you walk away from reading it with more questions than answers. The genera in which it is written makes its message difficult, truly to understand.

*More to follow.*

# St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



## CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES

are extended this weekend to

### GEORGE & IRENE DURISIN



as they celebrate their 66th Wedding Anniversary and George celebrates his 93rd year of life. We ask Almighty God to bless them abundantly, granting them, in particular health and happiness. **MNOHAYA LITA! GOD GRANT YOU MANY YEARS**

## CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES

are extended to Tony, Christie, William, Anastasia & Andrew Grech on the occasion of the initiation of their son and brother

### THOMAS GABRIEL

into the Church through the Mysteries of Baptism, Chrismation and Holy Eucharist. May God Grant to him and his family **MANY HAPPY AND HEALTHY YEARS - MNOHAYA LITA**



## CHOOSING TO LIVE A NEW LIFE

As you can tell, this is an ever-evolving article. I am at a point where I am thinking about the fact that I must "CHOOSE" to embrace a new life if I truly want to spiritually grow. This means that I must freely choose to embrace personal transformation and change.



The only way that I can spiritually grow is if I embrace a deliberate program of personal spiritual growth.

Of course this raises the first very important questions: *Do I want to grow spiritually? Do I see the importance of spiritual growth? Do I realize that I*

*have to spiritually grow if I want to come to a real and true meaning and purpose of this life?*

One of the problems I have encountered in working with people during these past 55 years is that few, if any, really understand that life, as God has created it, requires that I engage in a program of "spiritual growth" and "personal change." People don't like change, I understand this. But change is written into our very DNA. Life is all about change. We must freely choose to embrace change *(Continued on page 8)*

# BECOMING A HEALING PRESENCE FOR OTHERS

I must admit that this thought of becoming a healing presence to others has really captivated my thinking. This is something that I really want to do.

I have found that one of the essential attitudes I must adopt in order to become a healing person is that I must want to put others before myself. In many ways this is directly in conflict with the values of our society which stresses our individualism, which, in turn, tends to focus on our own individual needs and make secondary the needs of others. To be other-centered, as Jesus was, does not necessarily lead to a forgetfulness of our own needs. It just doesn't skew our thoughts about what is important.

To think about others first, if we are to be at all honest, allows us to think less of ourselves and, indirectly, reduces our need for self-centeredness. There is something healing that takes place when we consider the needs of others first. Our own needs are not as truly compelling.

I don't know if anyone has derived any benefit from this article. I would like to receive your reactions as I think

that I have come to the end of this topic. It is my intent to move on at this point if there are not any questions about being a healing presence.

Why do I think this topic is important? I think that it addresses, in a very subtle way, the true meaning and experience of the ministry of Jesus. He was, first and foremost, a healing presence to others. Everything He did while on earth points to His intent to be a "healing presence" to others - to in some small and subtle to lessen the load of others. To help them deal with the vicissitudes of life. Life can be very challenging. Think about what happens to us when people attempt to lessen the load of our own life's

challenges. It is truly a blessed moment, or at least I have found it to be. We sense the concern, love and caring of others. What a powerful and wonderful experience. My recent health episode again brought this into play. I am deeply thankful to the persons who cared for me and helped me. They were truly healing persons for me.

I would welcome any comments or reactions.



# A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO SPIRITUALITY

As I suggested in the last issue of this article, given the lack of a clear, coherent teaching on spirituality, is it any wonder that many of the faithful find it all just a bit confusing?

The result has been a tendency to color outside the lines, even for those who claim the name Christian. There are many modern, crazy ideas about spirituality. The real problem is that this has passed from a Christian sense of spirituality - God can be seen in His creation - to a pagan one that misses the distinction between Creator and creation and gets wrapped up in egotism - the tree is a symbol for myself. This is the danger inherent in much of modern spirituality: it ceases to be a way of reaching out to God and becomes a method of focusing on myself.

Another contemporary danger is that spirituality becomes idealism - an attempt to create a fantasy world in which everything is perfect and holy, so we can hide away from all that falls short. We use our imaginations to make up an ideal world in which the messy way sinners act out in the Church can be avoided. In the ideal spiritual world, all the sermons are literate, all the young children well-behaved, and all the meetings orderly.

It is a bit like hanging out with the elves in Rivendell. Unfortunately, this ideal world can become so important to us, so much preferred to the reality we encounter, that it becomes a way to flee reality, usually working itself out in a continuous round of church or religion-shopping in which we never find satisfaction anywhere. We cannot, because the spiritual place we are looking for is not real.

For true Eastern Christians this is all just a bit much. At the risk of being accused of being tolerance challenged, I admit I tend to gag at the misuse of a perfectly sound word like "spirituality." This word properly refers to the devotional practices

that help us put the teachings of Jesus Christ into day-to-day use as we seek to learn God's will and then do it. You see, spirituality has a very practical purpose that has nothing to do with releasing our inner mystic; spirituality means the hard work of saving our souls and transforming the world. Genuine Christian spirituality has the purpose of keeping us focused, rooting us in the kind of incarnational religion that so many believing Christians seem to have wandered away from, namely that God became a human person, just like you and me for our sakes.



# SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

**Sunday, April 25, Weekend of the Paralytic Man - Festal Tone**  
**10:00 AM - Intentions of George & Irene Durisim; George's 93rd**  
**Birthday and their 66th Wedding Anniversary. Family**

## 4th PASCHAL WEEK

Monday, April 26 - Basil, Bishop-Martyr  
*No Service Scheduled*

Tuesday, April 27 - Simeon, Bishop-Martyr  
*No Service Scheduled*

Wednesday, April 28 - MID-PENTECOST  
*No Service Scheduled*

Thursday, April 29 - The Nine Holy Martyrs of Cyzice  
*No Service Scheduled*

Friday, April 30 - James the Greater, Apostle  
*No Service Scheduled*

Saturday, May 1 - Jeremiah, Prophet  
*No Service Scheduled*

**Sunday, May 2, Week of the Samaritan Woman - Festal Tone**  
**10:00 AM + Mary Mhalko; Kotlinski Family**

*(Continued from page 5 - Choosing to Live a New Life)*

if we want to truly accomplish the meaning and purpose that God has set for our lives. God has given us this earthly life in order to spiritually grow with His help. We come into this world with the potential truly become God's child. That's why we are here. When I realize that the task of this earthly existence is to grow spiritually, then life begins to make much more sense.



What is important, however, is that we freely choose to engage in a life of spiritual growth. God does not force us to do this. That is why He gave us "free will". All He has ever done is to encourage us and to love us, hoping that we will, because of His love and encouragement, desire to change.

By the way, do not be misguided in thinking that we don't have to change. There is no one perfect except Jesus Christ, our Brother and Model.

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

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 Drobnay  
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

## THE BEATITUDES INTERPRETED: GREGORY OF NYSSA

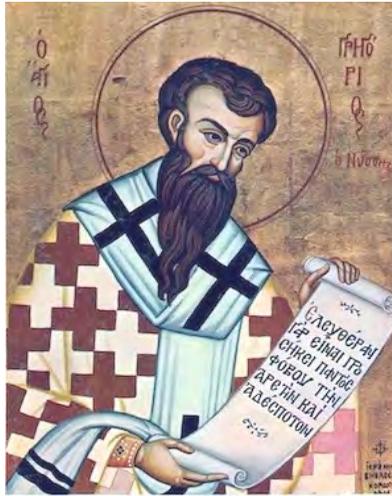
St. Symeon the New Theologian believes that personal transformation is available to all. He wrote: Do not say that God does not manifest Himself to man! Do not say that men cannot perceive the divine light, or that it is impossible in this age! Never is it found to be impossible, my friends. On the contrary it is entirely possible when one **desires** it! (Think about the story of Zacchaeus).

It should be added, too, that personal transformation is not an either/or proposition. It is better described as being achieved in “degrees” rather than whether one can or cannot “see” God. The ability to see God in our daily lives is a gift, a gift that is received, however, with much effort and struggle.

Before discussing “purity of heart,” let us examine the patristic and scriptural understanding of the heart. It is important to realize that, for the writers of the New Testament as well as that of the Church Fathers, the heart is considered the center of the person’s being. It is the seed of our thoughts and our will. within the heart we find our “entire mental and moral activity.” It is both the center of physical life as well as of our moral and spiritual life. Through the cleansing of our heart our

inner vision is transformed.

When then does it mean to be “pure of heart”? The Greek word for “pure,” *katharos*, means to be cleansed or chaste. To be cleansed is an act of God and is also a part of our own struggle to gain victory over the passions. In other words, becoming “pure of heart” is a synergistic act, for the writers of the New Testament as well as for the Fathers of the Church, requiring both the work of God and the work of the Christian. The end result is a heart that is “single-minded,” focused completely on the will of God. It would not be wrong to say that being pure in heart is also having “one intention,” that intention being God



Himself.

Thomas Merton had a good understanding of the Eastern Christian perspective of purity of heart. He wrote: Natural contemplation is the intuition of divine things in and through the reflection of God in nature and in the symbols of revelation. It presupposes a complete purification of heart by a long ascetic preparation which has delivered the soul from subjection to passion and, consequently, from the illusions generated by passionate attachment to exterior things.

***More to come!***

## AN IMPORTANT QUESTION: WHO IS JESUS?

At first, people had a natural inborn knowledge of God, and of what was right and wrong. We are all created with that knowledge inside us. But after some time people largely ignored it, says Irenaeus so that finally God “found it necessary to give them a written Law, because of the hardness or their hearts.”

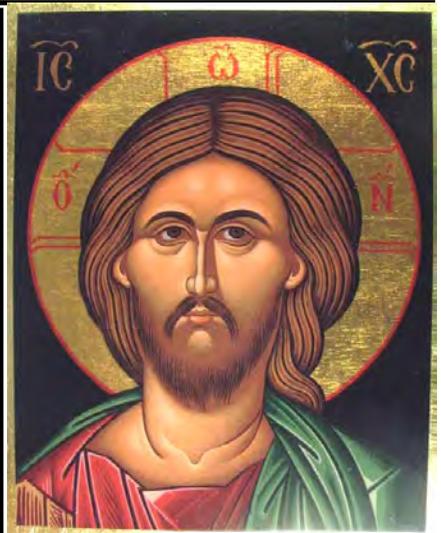
Dorotheus wrote in the sixth century: “In creating man, God implanted in him a thought which illumines the mind and shows that what is good and what bad. This is called conscience, and it is a natural law. By following this law, conscience, the patriarchs and all the saints pleased God, even before the Law was written. But when men covered up and trampled down conscience, there arose the need of written Law to uncover and raise it up, to rekindle this buried spark.

The Law, which became a part of the Jewish religion, was made up of the Ten Commandments that God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai. God added a lot of other special rules, but they weren't part of what we call the Law. These came through the Rabbis who interpreted the Law.

The Law described what a sinless person would and would not do. When people measured themselves by it, they could see how far they were from being good, or how close they were to it. They could tell whether they were breaking God's Law or not.

Many people embraced the Law, apparently thinking that all they had to do was obey it and it would make them good. But knowing what you should do doesn't give you the power to do it. Knowledge like that is just like an X-ray that shows you've got broken bones but can't fix them for you.

Scripture says about the Law that it's “a lamp, and a light to the path”. It lets you see where you



stand. All the Law could do, and all any rules or any laws can ever do, is show people their sin and then leave the problem of how to handle it up to them.

Religious people had the idea that the Law would make them holy and save them. But that's not what happened. they began to realize more and more that the Law didn't give them power to get rid of their sin. They found that even when they obeyed the Law as much as they possibly could, their situation didn't change - that, as the Apostle Paul says, “by the deeds of the Law there shall be no flesh justified in God's sight, for by the Law is only the knowledge of sin.”



# THE EASTERN HERALD

## СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, STL, Ph.D.  
Vol. 68 No 17                      Week of the Paralytic Man                      April 24-25, 2021

### VARIOUS ASPECTS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

When we look at our feelings as the motors of our lives, we need not worry that, for example, a feeling of anger acknowledged and felt will motivate us with energy only to be angry. Once the energy is released by acknowledging the feeling consciously, the energy is at our disposal to use as we see fit. We can decide to use the energy released by feeling anger, for example, to express love. This is the point of decision at which our moral code is all-important, for by it we will determine how to use the energy within us: to build or destroy, to plant or uproot. At various times any of those choices may be morally correct and even imperative, and our understanding of morality will guide our decision concerning what to do in a concrete situation.

Because we are often afraid of our feelings and the power they have, we are often tempted to repress them, that is, to leave them unacknowledged.

Doing this, however, only further confuses us and even leads us into sin. For when we repress a feeling it does not disappear, but sinks into unconsciousness where it is still active but out of our control.



When we repress an angry feeling, for example, it does not cease making us feel angry, but we have given up our ability to direct that anger to do something creative with it - a choice we could have made if we had first decided to acknowledge and feel the anger. Many times

we repress our emotions because we do not want to face the responsibility of making a moral decision concerning how to use the energy it will release in us. Making that moral decision would be, however, an important step in our spiritual growth.

Furthermore, that unconscious angry feeling will somehow find a way to be expressed without benefit of the light of consciousness.

### *The Cure of Baptism Foreshadowed*

What manner of cure is this? What mystery does it signify to us? For these things are not written carelessly, or without a purpose, but as a figure and type they show in outline things to come, in order that what was exceedingly strange might not, by coming unexpectedly, do harm among the many the power of faith. What then is it that they show in outline? A Baptism was about to be given, possessing much power, and the greatest of gifts, a Baptism purging all sins and making men alive instead of dead. These things then are foreshown as in a picture by the pool, and by many other circumstances. And first is given a water which purges the stains of our bodies, and those defilements which are not, but seem to be, as those from touching the dead, those from leprosy, and other similar causes; under the old covenant one may see many things done by water

on this account. However, let us now proceed to the matter in hand.

First then, as I before said, He causes defilements of our bodies, and afterwards infirmities of different kinds, to be done away by water. Because God, desiring to bring us nearer to faith in Baptism, no longer heals defilements only, but diseases also. For those figures which came nearer [in time] to the reality, both as regarded Baptism, and the Passion, and the rest, were plainer than the more ancient. ... And this miracle was done in order that men, learning that it is possible by water to heal the diseases of the body, and being exercised in this for a long time, might more easily believe that it can also heal the diseases of the soul.

*St. John Chrysostom*