

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



*Icon of Christ Healing the Centurion's Servant*

## A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this 4th weekend after Pentecost, our readings are taken from Paul's Letter to the Romans and Matthew's Gospel. In his letter, Paul exhorts his readers to "die to sin" so that they might have "life in God". He tells us and the Romans that "freed from sin ...we become slaves of God" and that our benefit is sanctification as we tend toward eternal life. His summary is: "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord".

What does he mean when he uses the term "wages of sin?" Sins, as we know, are human actions that we engage in which are "self-centered". When we think only of ourselves, we tend to perform various actions which, because they flow from this self-centeredness, "miss the mark" as far as being like Jesus.

The Biblical Greek terms for sin, **αμαρτία** (amartia), means "miss": it implies that one's aim is amiss and that one has not reached the goal, one's fullest potential. Remember that the goal of life is union with God.

If you ever want to assess your behavior, simply judge if the behavior flows from self-centeredness. If it does, it is probably a sin. Analyze all the various human behaviors. I think you will find that those that qualify for being called "sinful" can also be judged to be rather self-centered.

The passage we hear from Matthew's Gospel reports Christ's cure



of the Centurion's Servant. What is highlighted in this story is the deep and sincere "faith" the Centurion has in Jesus' ability to help his servant. He simply says *I am not worthy to have you under my roof. just give an order and my boy will get better.*

How would you compare your faith to that of the Centurion? Is it real enough that you feel you only have to ask once and are willing to accept whatever the response is?

We must always remember that God responds positively to the requests we make of Him. All He judges is whether the request is truly for our benefit. This is usually where we humans get hung up. We truly believe that everything we request is for our benefit. Only God knows what is best for our spiritual growth, our benefit.

It is important that we approach God with the attitude that He knows what is best for our growth. He tends not to "rescue" us from the challenges of life. Better to ask Him to be with you in facing these challenges.

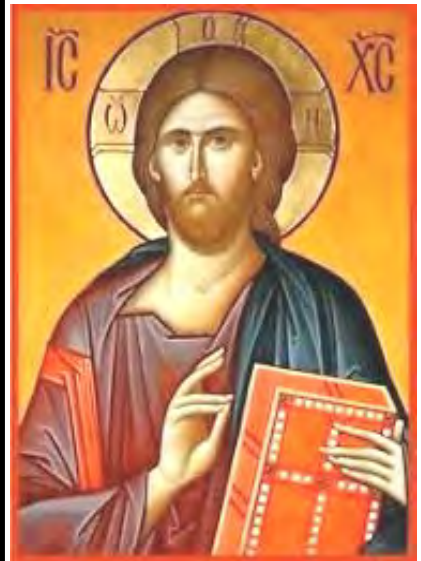
## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN TODAY?

Another way of defining faith is as VISION. This definition suggests that faith is a way of seeing. In particular, this is faith as a way of seeing *the whole*, a way of seeing “what is.”

There are three ways we can see the whole, and each goes with a particular way of responding to life. First, we can see reality as hostile and threatening. The clinical form of this is paranoia, of course, but you don’t have to be paranoid to see reality this way. The bottom line is that none of us gets out of here alive. And this is the fate of not just me and you, but of everybody we love, including our children and grandchildren. Death will get us all. Moreover, astrophysicists tell us, even the earth and the solar system will one day be destroyed as the sun explodes in its dying gasp (for you worriers, don’t worry yet, it will be thousands or perhaps billions of years from now). On a more finite level, life is filled with threats to our existence: accidents, disease (COVIC19), violence and poverty. Life easily looks threatening.

If we do see reality this way, how will we respond to life? In a word, **defensively**. We will seek to build systems of security and self-protection to fend off the hostile powers as long as possible. The attempt to secure ourselves in the face of a threatening reality takes many forms, secular and material as well as religious.

Indeed, many forms of popular Christianity throughout the centuries have viewed reality this way. God is the one who is going to get us - unless we offer the right sacrifices, behave the right way, or believe the right things. This is the “threat” of the earlier paradigm: God will judge us and punish those who “didn’t get it right.” But if we do “get it right,” then perhaps the consuming fire that will otherwise devour everybody and everything will spare us. Destroys any optimism.



In the second way of seeing the whole, it is perceived as indifferent. Not as paranoid as the first, this view doesn’t assume reality is “out to get us.” Rather, “What is” is simply indifferent to human purposes and ends. This is the most common modern secular viewpoint. The universe is made up of swirling force fields of matter and energy, but is neither hostile to nor supportive of our lives and dreams. Though it may be perceived as elegant and even magnificent, it is ultimately indifferent to human meanings. What do you think?



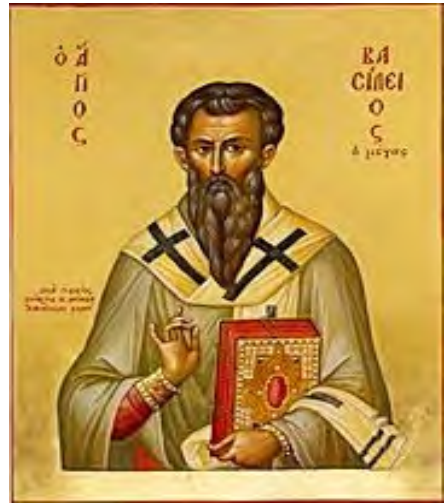
## ST BASIL THE GREAT AND THOUGHTS ON GENESIS

Genesis contains more than just the stories of creation and Adam and Eve. After all the struggle of Adam and Eve and the subsequent horror of Cain killing Abel, Genesis, with a connecting link, launches into the story of Noah and the Flood. Indeed Chapter five contains a series of generations and births and in chapter six we have another series of births - births that result from the unnatural union of the sons of God and the daughters of men. The monstrosity of it all is offered as an example of the degeneration of the race and a cause of the coming Flood.

Now it happened when man began to multiply on the face of the ground and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were good. And they took women for themselves, whomever they chose. Then Yahweh said, "My spirit shall not remain in man forever, inasmuch as he is flesh: his days will be 120 years." The Nephilim were on earth in these days - and even afterward - were the sons of God came into the daughters of man who bore children of them. These were the heroes of old, men of renown. (Hard to understand).

I suspect that most people have never read this portion Genesis. You would do well to pick up your Bible and read the TOTAL of Genesis over a period of time. I think that you will find it rather interesting.

It all began when man began to multiply. This multiplying took place on the face of the ground the choice of word perhaps stressing the earth-bound nature of the race. We are creatures that do not rise to heaven, where the sons of God live. Our place is a humble one, on the face of the soil from which we were taken. Though the previous stories focused on the births of sons (Lamech's one daughter is mentioned only in passing in



Genesis 4:22, here the focus is on daughters. The sons of God saw these women, and thought them good and took them for themselves as wives.

Who were these sons of God? Despite suggestions that they were aristocratic king (reading *elohim* here as a superlative) or the godly line of Seth, it seems clear that they were angels. That is how the phrase "sons of God" is used in Job 1:6. The *Book of Enoch* in 6:1-2 interpreted them as "the angels, the children of the heaven," the New Testament writers understood them in this way also (Peter 2:4; Jude 6-7). Other interpretations arose because commentators could not see how angels could impregnate women.

*I would again encourage you to read Genesis*

## THE EUCHARIST, DIVINE LITURGY AND HOLY COMMUNION



I am actually excited about this article since it brings together all of my thoughts about what it is that we do together as a community that worships a Triune God.

First and foremost, as I suggested in the last article, our ritual actions together are meant to express our true and real thanksgiving to God for the Gift of life. True worship of God is contained in an act of “Thanksgiving” for the gift of life. We join with Jesus our Brother in offering our very lives to God in thanking for the gift of life.

This “ritual act of offering thanksgiving for the gift of life” results in the Divine Liturgy, that is the ritual of the People of God who offer thanksgiving. The worship of God is truly something we do together, that is clergy and laity. An Eastern Christian priest cannot celebrate the Divine Liturgy alone. There must be at least one other person present. The Divine Liturgy is truly the “WORK” of the people of God.

The Divine Liturgy is not just the

work of the clergy. It is a “communal” worship of God. That means that all who participate wish to “offer thanks” to God for the gift of life.

We can immediately see where this can go wrong: either the clergy or the people are not truly thankful for the gift of life. This is typically evidenced by the way the Liturgy is celebrated. When the Liturgy is either “rushed” or “dragged” out, something is wrong. When it is obvious that people are not truly involved, something is wrong.

If we are having difficulty accepting life as it is unfolding, we may not be particularly thankful. This, then is a learning opportunity for us. To be thankful for the life that is given to us is critical. When we are going through difficult times, this may truly challenge us to accept life as it is presented to us.

A real part of genuine worship is **thankfulness**. We must accept life as it is delivered to us although we may not like it. We must always remember, God allows life to deliver to us that which is for our benefit. So, ritualized thankfulness then results in something very special, that is transformed symbols of life (i.e. transformed symbols of life, bread and wine, into the Body and Blood of Christ) - Holy Communion. The transformed gifts are God’s response to our willingness to be thankful for the Gift of Life. The transformed gifts also represent our willingness to make the changes necessary to be like Jesus.

## A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO SPIRITUALITY

Three elements provide the foundation for any serious Eastern Christian spiritual life: the Divine Liturgy and personal prayer. Any good rule will focus on these parts of spiritual life. Any good rule will focus on these parts of spiritual life, keeping them in proper balance. Think of them as the legs on a stool: the stool is perfectly safe and stable if it has at least three legs to support itself and whatever weight is placed on it; but if you remove one of the legs, the stool will collapse and anyone sitting on it will fall. If we try to live spiritual lives that do not have these three legs, they will collapse.

The Divine Liturgy is the center of the Christ's being. While Eastern Christian devotion does not generally focus on body parts, such as the Sacred Heart of the Roman tradition, I think it would be appropriate to call the Divine Liturgy the heartbeat of Christ's Body. Not just the offering of the Divine Liturgy, but also a prepared reception of the Holy Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, is of absolute importance based on the teaching of the Lord: "Unless you eat the flesh of the son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you". The

The opposite of life is death, so if we have no life in us without Holy Communion we are spiritually dead, no matter what else we are doing. We can fast, pray, and make prostrations until the cows come home, but without participation in the Divine Liturgy we are simply spiritual zombies, the walking dead in Christ.

What really happens when we offer the Divine Liturgy? Is it a show, a spiritual play, something acted out for our edification? What is that Jesus started at the Last Supper that we continue today? When we gather to offer the Divine Liturgy, we come together to be the fullness of the Body of Christ in whatever place

we happen to be offering it. Obviously this does not mean that all Eastern Christians in the world gather in one spot, but when the congregation of clergy and people come together, that is the complete expression of Christ's Body in that place. The late Father Schmemmann wrote:

The Liturgy is the "sacrament of the assembly." Christ came to "gather unto one the children of God who were scatted abroad."

I shall continue to share this idea in the next issue.



# Schedule of Services

**Sunday, June 20 - 4th Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 3 - Father's Day**  
**10:00 AM + Repose of John Kushner & Health of John Dicky Sr**  
**John & Janet Dicky**

## 5TH WEEKEND AFTER PENTECOST - Tone 4

Monday, June 21 - Julian, Martyr  
*No Service Scheduled*

Tuesday, June 22 - Eusebius, Bishop-Martyr  
*No Service Scheduled*

Wednesday, June 23 - Agrippina, Martyr  
*No Service Scheduled*

**Thursday, June 24 - Birth of John the Baptizer**  
**8:00 AM - Divine Liturgy of the Feast**

Friday, June 25 - Febronia, Venerable Martyr  
*No Service Scheduled*

Saturday, June 26 - David of Thessalonica, Venerable  
*No Service Scheduled*

**Sunday, June 27 - 5th Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 4**  
**10:00 AM - Divine liturgy**

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

*(Continued from page 5 - Choosing to Live a New Life)*  
may also show a compassionate or merciful heart. In this adjective, there is the word heart - *cor* in Latin - a heart that is sensitive to the unhappiness - *miseria*, in Latin - to another's adversity. In the gospel, Jesus asks the people to do something amazing, the impossible:



“be merciful even as your Father is merciful.” We will never be like the Father, but it is possible that by opening a heart of mercy, we may be similar to the divine heart, whose mercy has no limits.

Having an open heart also means to be ready to accept others as they are without judgment, bigotry or prejudice. It means to see them as living temples of God's Spirit whether they know it or not. It means refraining from the need to assess what we feel is their position before God. There is quite a tendency right now in our society to “judge others”.

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

## THE BEATITUDES INTERPRETED: GREGORY OF NYSSA

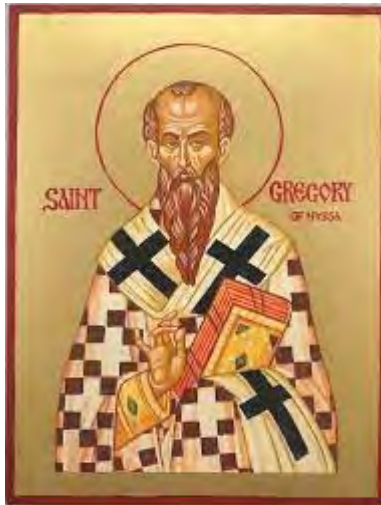
If the image of God is our potentiality for life in God, how and by what means is the image manifested? What is the human person in relation to the rest of creation? One priest describes human beings as being the crown of creation: “In the ladder of the earthly creation, man is placed on the highest rung, and in relationship to all earthly beings he occupies the reigning positions.” This priest states that we surpass all other creatures because we are created with a soul. The human person “is a living, organic union of the earthly and the heavenly, the material and the spiritual,” having been formed from the earthly elements and having received God’s breath of life.

While this may be true, we should not be puffed-up with feelings that we are in any way better than the rest of creation. While we humans may be the ultimate of God’s creation, we are still His creation, formed out of love. We should always remember that He had to create an environment in which we could survive. So the rest of creation has an important role to play.

God took a great risk when He created humans in His image and with the potential to grow in His likeness. Of course that is what unconditional love has to do. It has to take the risk of

freely loving without the thought of love in return.

If the image of God is our potentiality for life in God, how and by what means is the image manifested? The priest quoted earlier, describes human beings as being the crown of creation: “In the ladder of the earthly creation, man is placed on the highest rung, and in relationship to all earthly beings he occupies the reigning positions.” Humans, according to this priest, states that we humans surpass all other creatures because we are created with a soul. The human person “is a living, organic union of the earthly and the heavenly, the material and the spiritual,” having been formed from the earthly elements and having received God’s breath of life.



This, of course, requires faith. Is this true? If it is true, than what can we say about ourselves? This requires us to admit that somehow we are connected to the Creator in a very special way that and we have to answer the questions: *Why have I been created? Why have I been created in the “image” of God? Why am I here on earth? What is the course of life all about? What happens after this earthly life? Do I believe I am immortal?*



## THE DOCTRINES OF PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY



I ended the last addition to this article by stating that 1 Peter is an epistle of courage in the face of trials and suffering. The letter is a unit in itself and not a composite of two letters. It is a real letter that manifests the spirit of primitive Christianity.

The unity of the epistle is reflected in its major themes, which convey a unified message. These are the themes of suffering, hope, salvation and baptism, but most predominant is the theme of *election*. All the Christians who are scattered over the earth belong to the community of the elect. The Church knows that she is the elect of Israel. Christ is the living stone, rejected by man but

chosen by God. He creates and upholds the people of God. These are the reasons why we should start with this theme, in order to bring out the central theological message of the letter, which is Christological.

The Christians to whom Peter addressed this letter are newly “chosen and destined by God the Father.” At the very beginning he states the full meaning of their election. The source and initiative of their election are not in themselves but in “God the Father.” They are not chosen because of their merits. Here the author is stressing the transcendent basis for their election, not that it was predestined. Election is enacted by baptism, “sanctified by the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood.” As in Exodus 24:6-8, a text that describes the ratification of the old covenant, we have “obedience” and “sprinkling with blood” linked together. The new covenant came into existence with the blood of Christ. All who have been baptized were baptized into Christ’s death, and thus brought into a new relationship with God. Election in 1 Peter is expressed in terms of an ancient Trinitarian formula: God the Father, the Spirit and Jesus Christ. A recipient’s baptism is also implied in it. What is revealed to them in their baptism is that they are chosen. The newly baptized are sanctified by the Spirit. They pledge their obedience to Christ, and they are now members of the new covenant and live with Him.

Christians are asked to come to Christ, but this coming involves belonging to the Church. God has His own mysterious plan for all mankind. This is about His plan for us and says nothing about the rest of humankind.

# St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



## CHOOSING TO LIVE A NEW LIFE



I began this new expression of this article by looking at the idea of “opening one’s heart.” The word *heart* is not understood only in the concrete sense of the organ. It also designates a place which, in a symbolic sense, can be opened or closed, and where many things may occur. If we consult a dictionary, we can verify that the word heart has an almost inexhaustible wealth of meanings. To say of someone that he has a heart of stone is to emphasize its closure, or to say that he has “the heart of an artichoke” means that he shows an excessive openness and that he falls in love very easily. If he has a heart of gold, he is good and generous. This multiplicity of meanings shows to what extent the idea we have of a person’s heart betrays his character traits metaphorically.

By no means can we truly exhaust true phrases of about a person’s heart: an honest and true heart, a compassionate heart a genuine heart. The list goes on. We can also refer to a person’s “closed heart”, vicious heart or unfriendly heart.

The first meaning of “opening one’s heart” is to be open, to confide especially in a friend who then becomes a bosom friend, with whom one can speak openly. Other meanings are possible: opening one’s heart

## FATHER’S DAY



I would, on behalf of the entire Parish Family, extend our best wishes to all the Fathers and men of our parish, asking God to grant them health, happiness and length of days. I would also ask Almighty God to grant our deceased Fathers blessed repose.

**Many Years! Многая літа!**

**Eternal Memory! Вічна пам’ять!**

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### SEPECIAL

A special and big **THANK YOU** is truly extended do those continue to support with donations albeit can only join us virtually on the Internet because of a number of reasons. Your support is deeply appreciated. We remember you in our prayers.



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***My father didn't tell me how to live. He lived and let me watch him do it.***



# THE EASTERN HERALD

## СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, STL, Ph.D.  
Vol. 68 No 22                      4th Weekend After Pentecost                      June 19-20, 2021

### VARIOUS ASPECTS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH



Most people discover how to listen to God through a practical question or a pressing personal experience: People want to know how to pray for healing, or they need some specific guidance in their lives, or they become tired of personal prayer in which they do all the talking and never seem to receive a response. Each of these situations brings up the topic of spiritual growth through listening to God, for listening to God is the only answer to these questions and the only solution to these problems.

Let us take as an example a

situation in which we want to know for what we should pray when we are praying for healing for ourselves. How do we *know* what should be the focus of our prayer? There is only one answer: We must ask God what He wants done and then listen for His answer; then we pray that that which He suggests. for, if we want our prayers to succeed, we cannot merely pray for whatever seems best for us. Daily, Christians pray the words, “You will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” But if we are really praying for *our* will to be done, we have in our own minds deposed God and taken His place. Also, if we pray for our will to be done, we are not sure our prayer can or even ought to be answered; for only what God wants *will* be done. Only He sees the total picture and knows exactly the best thing to do at any moment.

We must pray, then, for God’s will to be done; and to find out what He wants, we must ask Him. But another question quickly arises: When we ask God to reveal His will and we hear an answer within us, how do we know whether we have heard God’s voice? Could this not be our own thought?

Yes it could. And that is why we must learn how to “listen” to God’s voice. It is important to be able to distinguish God’s voice from the many other voices of self within.                      ***Think about this!***



### *Nowhere in Israel Have I Found as Much Faith*

The Lord Jesus agreed to go to the centurion's house to cure his servant, but he replied: *I am not worthy to have you under my roof; only say the word and my servant will be healed.* In protesting his unworthiness the centurion showed himself worthy to have Christ enter not his house but his heart. Yet he could not have said this with such faith and humility unless he already bore within his heart the One he was too overawed to have within his house. In any case, there would have been no great happiness at the entry of the Lord Jesus within his walls if he were not present in his heart.

But what emboldened the centurion to act as he did? *I am under authority myself*, he said, *and have soldiers under me; and I say to one man, Go,*

*and he goes; to another, Come here, and he comes; to my servant, Do this, and he does it.*

Now the man who said this was a Gentile as well as a centurion. He was a professional soldier and, as a centurion, acted according to his rank: subject to authority and exercise in authority, obeying as a subordinate and giving orders to those subordinate to him. As for the Lord, though living among the Jewish people, He was already beginning to make it known that His Church would extend throughout the whole world into which He was about to send His apostles. Although the Gentiles would not see him they would believe in him, whereas the Jewish leaders who saw him would put him to death.

*St. Augustine of Hippo*