

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of the Healing of Jarius' Daughter (Luke 8:41-56)

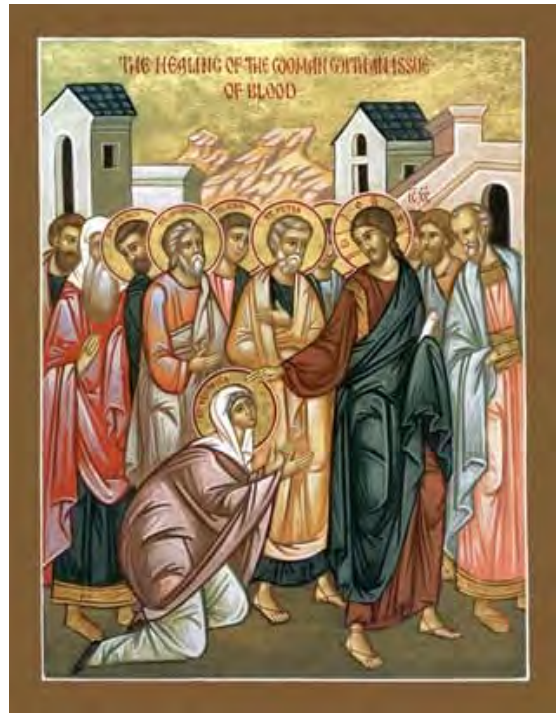
REFLECTIONS ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this 24th weekend after Pentecost our readings are taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians and Luke's account of Jesus' cure of Jarius' only daughter and a hemorrhage victim. Both readings, I believe, have a real message for us.

The message from Paul's letter is a continuation of the reading that we heard last week, namely that all who follow the Way of Jesus are *United in Christ*. Paul makes the point that if we truly embrace the Good News that Jesus shared, namely God's revelation about how to live this earthly life, we will be united with all other humans. His message is one of "unity" among all humans as a way to spiritual growth. Paul declares that it is Jesus' message that has broken down the *barrier of hostility that keeps people apart*. God reconciled all humankind in one body *through His cross*.

Is this something you believe? Did Jesus remove any potential barriers between you and others? If He did, do you feel united to others without exception? We probably have not heard His message IF we judge others or are afraid of others.

The Gospel story we hear this weekend again highlights the great power that Jesus has to heal us and everyone if only we turn to Him. Think of the faith of the woman who snuck up on Him and only touched the hem of His garment and was healed. After she did this, Jesus called her to openly profess belief in Him.



The story about the cure of Jarius' daughter contains these important words of Jesus: *Fear is useless; what is needed is trust!* I think that these words truly resonate in my heart.

So the overall message from our readings this weekend is that if we place our hope and trust in Jesus, truly believing that His Way of Living is the true way to live in order to spiritually grow and become all that we are capable of becoming, we will find the fullness of life, just as the woman and Jarius' daughter did.

Do you truly believe that Jesus has the *answer* to the meaning and purpose of your life? Do you believe that His Way of Living is truly God's revelation to you?

SOME THOUGHTS ON PRAYER



Tons of things have been written about prayer. John Chrysostom wrote “Nothing equals prayer. It makes possible what is impossible, easy what is difficult. It is not possible for the person who prays to fall into sin.”

Further, Theophane the Recluse explained why the fathers wrote so many treatises on prayer: “Prayer is everything, it is the summary of everything: the faith, life according to the faith, salvation”. Prayer, he claims, is a veritable handbook of salvation. Why? Because prayer is the expression of the life of the Holy Spirit within us, the ‘breath of the spirit’, the ‘barometer of the spiritual life.’ The entire Church ‘breathes through prayer.’

The monks of old called prayer the divine philosophy, ‘the science of sciences’. Philosophy has always searched out first principles, the reason for things that are. For Christians this is the Father, to whom

the Spirit leads us through the Son. Because he is a Person, the approach to him presupposes a dialogue, that is, prayer.

To whom do we pray? According to the ancient liturgical rule, prayer is addressed to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. Origen believed that one ought to pray not to Christ but *through* Christ.

As you may know, my readers, this is the stance of our Eastern Church. We always direct our prayers, as Jesus did, to the Father, *through Him*, Christ, *in* the Holy Spirit.

As you may recall, this is why the Eastern and the Western Churches disagreed about the wording of the Creed, the Eastern Church maintaining that both the Son and the Spirit *proceed* from the Father (*as you know, that is how the original creed was written and then the Western Church decided to change the wording. It is called the filioque controversy. The Western wording seems to imply that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son*).

During prayer, the soul is guided by the Spirit of God. It prays ‘in the Spirit’. It is therefore a sort of ‘inspiration’, because the Spirit prays in us, only in this way do we know what to ask and does our voice reach God.

When we freely give ourselves to prayer, we can actually experience the Spirit within us lifting our hearts and minds to the Father.

ACQUIRING THE MIND OF CHRIST

St. John Chrysostom explains that there is a universal rule that we can use to discern the reality of heaven and hell: no one from among those who strive to please God and live a virtuous life according to the commandments will ever doubt the teaching about the judgment and hell. From their own experience they come to know and truly understand, to varying degrees, the death that sin causes and the life that virtue brings. St. Gregory of Sinai tells us that “passion-embroiled states are truly foretastes of hell’s torments, just as the activity of the virtues is a foretaste of the kingdom of heaven.

If you pay close attention to how the Fathers speak about heaven and hell, you realize that they do not express their belief that God judges us to one condition or another and that neither heaven nor hell are a “place” as we know “places” to be in our material world.

In our life we place the different ‘ingredients’ within our souls, either the virtues or passions and sins. Once

we encounter the uncreated flame of God’s presence outside this world, these ingredients are indelibly ‘baked’ into our souls. For St. Gregory of Sinai, after death

...the fire, darkness, the worm and the nether world correspond to ubiquitous self-indulgence, total ignorance, all-pervasive lecherous pleasures and

the fearfulness and foul stench of sin, which already now can be seen to be active, as foretastes and first fruits of hell’s torments in sinners in whose souls they have taken root.

In speaking in this manner, it must be realized, the Fathers did not necessarily hold and maintain that this happens to a person after only a short existence on earth. They did say that forgetfulness and doubt of hell stem from genuine

forgetfulness of God. Consequently remembrance of God and the reality of hell is a property of saints, who forever consider themselves worthy of its flames.

I know that this may be difficult to fully comprehend. It all speaks to our desire to be oriented to God and not the world!





Holy Ascension Community News

An Eastern Catholic Church in Plymouth Michigan



Holy Ascension Christian Community has had a long tradition of working together with the First Methodist Church of Plymouth to provide a dinner to persons who are temporarily seen as homeless.

HOMELESS SHELTER DINNER

Friday, November 16, 2018

Please let Mary Christie know you can help



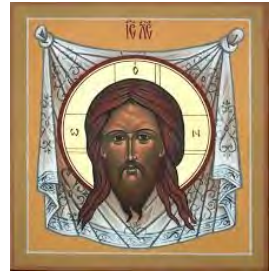
Please remember in your prayers

AIDEN SAUNDERS



CALLED TO HOLINESS

So the call to holiness is a call to truly believe that holiness is possible and that holy people can change our society and world, making it a better place for all humans to grow and thrive. Of course one of the problems we encounter is that Christianity in these United States is very diverse. Some believe that our culture has become so powerful that we are simply incapable of transforming it. Others believe that the only solution is to force Christian values on everyone, regardless of their religion. This, of course, creates a real conflict. No sooner we begin to think that our beliefs are the only true and real beliefs, we fall into error. Further, Christians have frequently been manipulated by politicians for their own gain. So how do we sort this all out?



The Call to Holiness is a call to personal transformation and change and to make sure that we do not contribute to the problems of our society and culture but, rather, simply bear witness to the goodness of God and His love for us. *(Continued on page 8)*

MAN, THE TARGET OF GOD



This has been an interesting, albeit difficult, article to present. What is most interesting is the fact that God decided from all eternity to give the *unique gift* of personality - the Hypostatic Principle - to humankind. That is why, in the previous issue of this article, I shared some thoughts about God as Trinity and the fact that because of this idea of *hypostasis* (Person) God can be ONE and yet Three-in-One.

So too with humankind. God created each of us with a *unique personality* (hypostasis) and yet we all share in the same nature or Essence. Each One of the three

Hypostases bears in Himself the fullness of Divine Being, which belongs to Each in an absolute way; each Person is thus dynamically equal to the Triune Unity. In spite of the perfect identity of Being and of communion in Being, the three Hypostases maintain irreducibly Their respective otherness and uniqueness. This is the second apparent contradiction of identity and distinction. Each Hypostasis has everything in common with the two Hypostases, except the particularity of His own Personhood. The Father without beginning, Who is unbegotten, the co-eternal Son, Who is begotten and the Holy Spirit, Who proceeds. These three Hypostases or Persons constitute a pure Fact of Being, which God Himself has revealed to man. In the Divine Being, nothing exists outside the Hypostatic Principle. The self-determination of the Divine Hypostases in eternity is also a *fact* having no beginning which is inherent in the Hypostases themselves, being in no way determined or imposed by the Essence.

This is heavy stuff! If you think about it, however, you will see what it means that we have been created in His Image and have the potential to grow in His likeness. It is precisely because the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, came to this understanding of God that humans can maintain that we are made in God's image. The Hypostatic Principle is a **UNIQUE GIFT OF THE TRIUNE GOD**. Think about it. Each of us are uniquely individual and yet we all share in the same Essence or Nature.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY TRINITY - WHO IS GOD?

As you will recall, there have been many **wrong** doctrines or ideas about God according to the Church. Still another wrong doctrine is that the Father is one God, the Son is another God, and the Holy Spirit still another God. There cannot be *three gods*, says the Church, and certainly not *gods* who are created or made. Still less can there be *three gods* of whom the Father is *higher* and the others *lower*. For there to be more than one God, or *degrees of divinity* are both contradictions which cannot be defended, either by divine revelation or by logical thinking.

Thus, the Church teaches that while there is only One God, yet there are Three who are God - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit - perfectly united and never divided yet not merged into one with no proper distinction. How then does the Church defend its doctrine that God is both One and yet Three?

First of all, it is the Church's teaching and its deepest experience that there is only one God because there is only one Father. In the Bible the term *God* with very few exceptions is used primarily as a name for the Father. Thus, the Son is the *Son of God*, and the Spirit is the *Spirit of God*. The Son is born from the Father, and the Spirit proceeds from the Father - both in the same timeless and eternal action of the Father's own being.

In this view, the Son and the Spirit are both one with God and in no way separated from Him. Thus, the Divine Unity consists of the Father, with His Son and His Spirit distinct from Himself and yet perfectly united together in Him. What the Father is, the Son and the Spirit are also. This is the Church's teaching. The Son, born of the Father, and the Spirit, proceeding from Him, share the divine nature



with God, being of one essence with Him.

Thus, as the Father is, according to the prayer of our Divine Liturgy,

*Ineffable inconceivable,
invisible, incomprehensible,
ever-existing and eternally
the same*

so the Son and the Spirit are exactly the same. Every attribute of divinity which belongs to God the Father - life, love, wisdom, truth, blessedness, holiness, power, purity, joy - belongs equally as well to the Son and the Holy Spirit. The being, nature, essence, existence and life of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are absolutely and identically one.

Schedule of Services

Holy Ascension
Eastern Catholic Church
1062 Church Street
Plymouth, MI 48170

Rev Wayne J. Ruchgy PhD
Serving Priest

Rectory: (313) 582-1424
Emergency: (313) 580-4412
WRuchgy@gmail.com

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Saturdays

5:30 PM English

Lenten Services

Wednesdays @ 7:45 PM

Religious Education

September-June

SACRAMENTS

Penance

By Appointment

Baptism & Matrimony

*Six-month membership
required*

Funerals

*Membership of an
immediate
family member required*

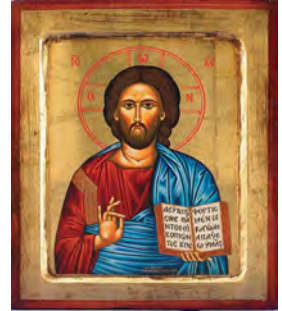
Saturday, November 3 - 24th Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 7
5:30 PM - Divine Liturgy

Saturday, November 10- -25th Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 8
5:30 PM - Divine Liturgy

(Continued from page 5 - Called to Holiness)

It's really not a matter of being right. It's a matter of being loving and kind and not allow the response of others to dictate what we believe.

So one of the first steps we have to take if we want to respond to this call of holiness is to seriously examine our own beliefs and ideas about God, others and ourselves. Once we are firm in our understanding of our own beliefs, we can go about attempting to create *Holy Moments* for ourselves and others. Many times it might mean only extending a smile and kind word to someone else. It might also mean making sure that we respect and honor the thoughts and beliefs of others without questioning our own thoughts and beliefs!



Prayer Request

Please remember in your prayers.

Loretta Simon
Larry Tailard

**Life's Journey is
an *ascension* to the
Heavenly Father that
is made**

**through personal
attitudinal change
and spiritual**

Promote Holy Ascension by sharing our website
<http://www.holyascensionugcc.com>

EVERYDAY FUND-RAISING FOR HOLY ASCENSION

Here are several ways to help raise funds for Holy Ascension.

KROGER CARD: Register your name and number

GOOD SEARCH: Use this Internet search engine to gain credit for Holy Ascension. Use *Good Shop* to shop online.

GIFT CARDS

Holy Ascension offers gift cards for a variety of stores in the community. Use them and help Holy Ascension.

BUSCH'S

Re-loadable gift cards available for these stores.

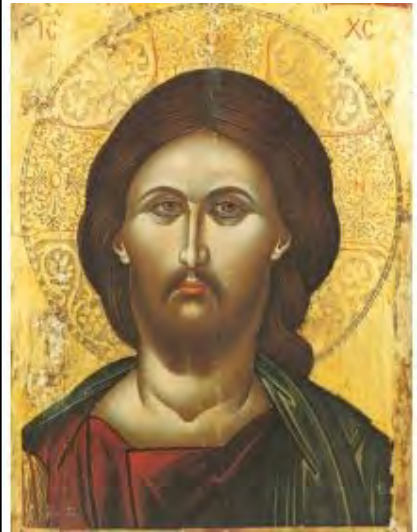
USED CANS: Holy Ascension recycles eligible cans

Involvement in these programs is not limited to Holy Ascension members. Family members, neighbors and friends can help.

MORE ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

The question about why God decided from all eternity to become Incarnate as Jesus never stood at the center of attention in Byzantium: Byzantine theologians envisaged rather the concrete fact of human mortality, a reality in which God, through the Incarnation, became personally, or rather *hypostatically*, involved. This became the means that God foresaw, from all eternity, to help free human beings freely return His love and to become all that He created them to be. The major, and, apparently, the only, exception to this general view is given by Maximus the Confessor, for whom the Incarnation and “recapitulation” of all things in Christ is the true “goal” and “aim” of creation. The Incarnation, therefore, was foreseen and foreordained independently of anything that humans could do. This view fits in exactly with Maximus’ idea of created “nature” as a dynamic process oriented toward an eschatological goal - Christ the Incarnate Word. As creator, the Word stands as the “beginning” of creation, and as incarnate, He is also its “end” when all things will exist not only “through Him,” but “in Him.” In order to be “in Christ,” creation had to be assumed by God, made “His own” the Incarnation, therefore, is a precondition of the final glorification of man independent of man’s behavior.

I realize that in order to embrace this genuine understanding of God’s Incarnation, we have to rethink all the old ideas that we may have about mankind’s FALL, therefore necessitating God taking some kind of action. This type of thinking, by the way, makes God’s actions dependent upon mankind’s actions which makes absolutely no sense. Mankind cannot change the actions of God. God, however, can change mankind’s behavior. It seems that humans have a deep



tendency to make God in their image instead vice-versa. Think about it. We want God to punish others in order to satisfy our sense of justice. Human want God to reward the good people and punish the bad people. Why? Because that is exactly how humans behave. Perhaps this is why we humans find it so difficult to unconditionally love others. We feel there has to always be conditions. So, of course, we envision a God Who always places conditions on His love for humans.

Questions: What kind of God do you envision? Does He act like us humans? Does He place conditions on His love for us? Think about this.

UNDERSTANDING THE HOLY GOSPELS

Another characteristic of Luke appears in the way earlier events or statements anticipate or “prophesy” future events: hopes are thus seen eventually to reach fulfillment in Jesus’ passion-glorification. Some statements suspend the reader between the present and the future. At other times we detect a definite parallel between the present and the future. Luke, however, not only has a way of foreshadowing the future but also feels the necessity of imparting a literary symmetry to an episode. He will round out the description of an event by including details of what will happen later. He rearranges the sequence of events so that something important happens before, during and after. He recasts chapter 14 according to an artificially contrived chronological sequence: entering the house; taking one’s place at table; lunch or dinner; evening dinner (14: 1-16).

In a desire for order, Luke ordinarily avoids necessary repetitions of similar events: only one anointing of Jesus; one multiplication of loaves and fishes; one account of the barren fig tree; one return of Jesus to the apostles in the garden; one trial scene before Jewish authorities (*i.e., in order accounts this is not necessarily true*). This arrangement and suppression of details from an artistic point of view did not keep Luke from a double citation of certain sayings, or logia, of Jesus. Luke was a careful historian besides being a sensitive artist; he respected his sources. Some, Logia, therefore, occur twice; derived once from Mark and perhaps again from “Q”. Luke parallels the first and the second stage of Jesus’ ministry

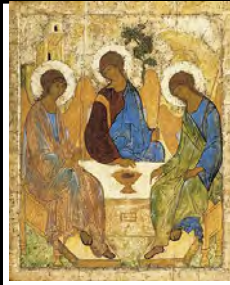
Some of Luke’s doctrinal attitudes are: Jesus as prophet; the parallel between Jesus’ activity in the Third Gospel and the Church’s ministry in Acts; the concern for the Gentiles, the poor and the outcasts.

An overarching plan reaches from the Gospel into ACTS. Each begins in messianic Jerusalem with



the imparting of the Spirit. The Gospel then presents Jesus’ Galilean ministry and his journey to Jerusalem. ACTS subsequently takes up the early ministry of the apostles, confined from the most part within Judaism, followed by Paul’s journey to the center of the world, Rome. Each ends with a rejection of Jesus by his own people, which leads to a world-wide apostolate. Not only is there this parallel between the Gospel and Acts, but we also find the Acts continues where the Gospel leaves off.

It is good that we truly begin to understand the milieu of the Gospels



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНИЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 64 No 44 24th Weekend after Pentecost November 3-4, 2018

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN EAST

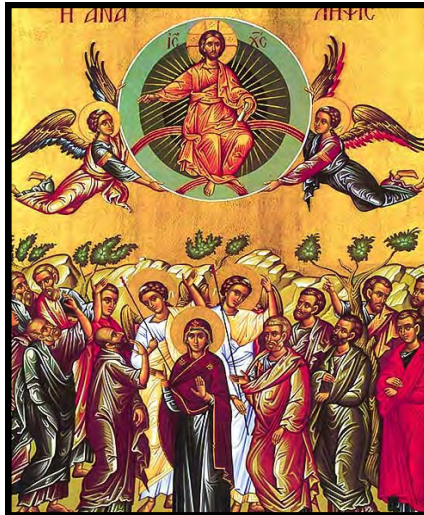
Many Eastern Christian authors remind us that the idea of *deification*, oneness with God, God-likeness, is “that which from the beginning has constituted the innermost longing of man’s existence.”

Indeed, as the Eastern Church has professed down through the centuries, the true goal that God, through life, has established for all humankind is that we humans might work to become more united with God, that we might, by trying to be more like Jesus, become more like the human beings that God intended when He created us and called us into existence. He

called us out of love and a true and real desire to share life with us. Because, however, He desired that we should freely embrace this goal, He does not force on us any particular way of living. Rather, He chose to allow life to deliver to us the challenges that can bring us to this desire to truly be

children of God like Jesus, our Brother.

So we are created and placed on this earth with the power of free will. We are given challenges by LIFE to become more closely united with God.



Life's Journey Is an Ascension to the Heavenly Father

It is then up to us to either embrace the Jesus Way of Living, which can lead to the fullness of life, or we can reject it. God saw, from all of eternity, that love directed toward Him must be freely given. As I have said on many different occasions, if we “fear” God we cannot truly love Him. So we have a free and unconstrained choice: do we freely return God’s love and

begin to live like Jesus or do we refrain from returning His love and live like humans who do not believe that He loves us? It is our choice? Do we respond to God’s love, really feeling that He loves us? Do we want to freely return His love or do we fear Him and possible punishment?

Two Miracles Attest that Jesus is the Resurrection and Life

Christ foreknew His mystery, even before the foundations of the world. It was in the last ages of the world that He arose for the inhabitants of earth. Having borne the sin of the world, He abolished both it and death, which is its consequence and was brought upon us by its means. He plainly said, "I am the resurrection and the life," and "he who believes in me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death unto life." We will see this fulfilled in facts. The ruler of the synagogue of the Jews came near and, embracing the Savior's knees, begged Him to deliver his daughter from the bonds of death. Look, she already was brought down

to this and was in extreme danger! The Savior consented and set out with him. He was even hurrying on to the house of the one who invited Him and was aware that what was being done would profit many of those who followed Him and would also be for His own glory. On the way, He saved the woman who was the victim of a severe and incurable malady. No one could stop her issue of blood that ruined the art of physicians. No sooner had she touched the hem in faith, than He immediately healed her. A miracle so glorious and revealed was, so to speak, the work merely of Christ's journey.

St. Cyril of Alexandria