

SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN



Icon of Christ and the Samaritan Woman

May 18, 2014

SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

THE HOLY MARTYR THEODOTUS OF ANCYRA

THE HOLY MARTYRS PETER, DIONYSIUS, ANDREW, PAUL AND CHRISTINA OF LAMPSACUS

THE SEVEN HOLY VIRGINS: ALEXANDRA, TECUSA, CLAUDIA, PHAINE, EUPHRASIA, MATRONA AND JULIA

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF MAY 19 – MAY 25

SATURDAY, MAY 24

NOTE: No Vespers this evening

SUNDAY, MAY 25 – SUNDAY OF THE MAN BORN BLIND; THE THIRD FINDING OF THE PRECIOUS HEAD OF THE HOLY AND GLORIOUS PROPHET, FORERUNNER AND BAPTIZER JOHN; PASSING INTO ETERNAL LIFE (1951) OF BLESSED MYKOLA (NICHOLAS) TSEHEL'SKY, PRIEST AND MARTYR

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

All Parishioners



The Holy Martyr Theodotus of Ancyra (May 18)

Theodotus was married and an innkeeper in Ancyra during the reign of Diocletian. Although married, he lived according to the word of the apostle: “Let those having wives act as not having them” (1 Corinthians 7:29). He maintained the inn in order to unsuspectedly help Christians. His inn was a shelter of the persecuted faithful. Theodotus secretly sent help to those Christians who fled to the mountains and secretly gathered the bodies of those who died and buried them. At that time, seven maidens were brought to trial and tortured for Christ, ridiculed and finally drowned in a lake. One of them, St. Thecusa appeared in a dream to Theodotus and told to him to remove their bodies from the lake and bury them. In the darkness of night, Theodotus, with a companion, went out to fulfill the wish of the martyr and, led by an angel of God, succeeded to locate all seven bodies and bury them. But this companion betrayed Theodotus to the judge and the judge subjected him to cruel tortures. Theodotus endured all sufferings as though

he were in someone else’s body keeping his whole mind engrossed in the Lord. When the torturer transformed his entire body into wounds and knocked out his teeth with a stone, he ordered him to be beheaded. When he was led to the scaffold, many Christians wept for him and St. Theodotus said to them: “Brethren, do not weep for me but glorify our Lord Jesus Christ Who helped me to complete this mortification and to overcome my enemy.” Having said this, he place his head on the block under the sword and was beheaded in the year 303 A.D. A priest honorably buried this martyr’s body on a hill outside the town. Later on, a church was built on this spot in the name of St. Theodotus. (*Prologue from Ohrid*)



LORD JESUS CHRIST.
SON OF GOD.
SAVIOR

THE DEACON

Duties

The deacon ministers to the priest and bishop in the divine services. This includes:

- Assisting in the celebration of the mysteries of the Church
- Leading the people in the collective prayers (with the blessing of the presiding priest or bishop)
- Reading from the Scriptures during the divine services (with the blessing of the presiding priest or bishop)
- Keeping the decorum of the public worship, including calling people to attention at appropriate times
- Any tasks of the subdeacon or reader
- Other tasks related to Church life, with the blessing and direction of his priest or bishop.

In some jurisdictions, a deacon may be blessed by his bishop and parish priest to distribute the Eucharist to the faithful, either from a second chalice at a regular liturgy where a priest is serving or in connection with a typika service that is celebrated when the priest is absent.

What a deacon does may depend on jurisdiction - some consider the diaconate as a short interval before the priesthood - but, where permanency or longevity in the diaconate is prized, deacons will often head educational programs and youth groups, perform hospital visitation, missionary work, and conduct social welfare projects.

Allowances

Deacons are permitted to wear a cassock; this is done as a sign of his suppression of his own tastes, will and desires, and his canonical obedience to God, his bishop and the liturgical and canonical norms of the Church. Deacons are also permitted to wear the exoraso (or ryassa). In jurisdictions that utilise clergy shirts, deacons generally wear a clergy shirt with collar.

During services, the deacon is usually vested in a sticharion with an orarion that hangs over the left shoulder; with the exception of around the consecration of Communion, when the deacon will, for practicality, arrange his sticharion like a subdeacon.

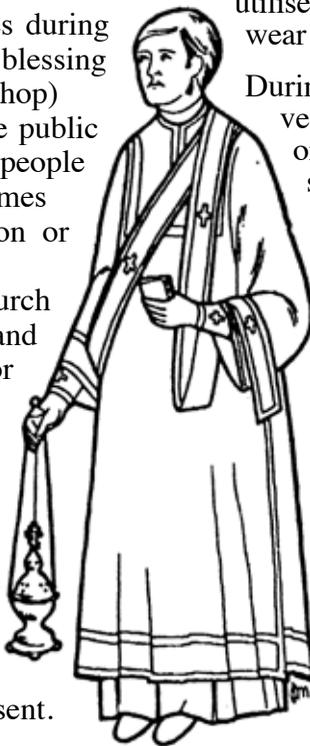
In addition, to complete his duties, the deacon is permitted to touch the Table of Oblation, the Altar, and to move through the Royal Doors.

Restrictions

The place of a deacon is to serve the community and to lead prayers. He must have the blessing of the presiding priest or bishop to put on his vestments and serve. A deacon may not celebrate the sacraments by himself; he may not give blessings; he may not consecrate the Holy Gifts.

Etiquette

The proper way to address a deacon in our tradition is "Father Deacon [*First Name*]"



THE CROSS AND THE DRUG CULTURE

BENJAMIN MANN

Our Byzantine Catholic community had just finished the evening service for Good Friday, ritually enacting Jesus' burial with a candlelit procession. Right across the street, meanwhile, revelers were kicking off the weekend-long "420 Festival," celebrating Colorado's legalization of marijuana.

During our outdoor procession, carrying the iconic burial shroud and singing the Trisagion hymn, it had not been difficult to ignore the pulsating music from nearby. And once we were back inside, to bow before the tomb and venerate Christ's wounds, it had been even easier to forget the world outside.

The difficult moment, the moment of subtle spiritual danger, came after all this: when the service was finished, and the community dispersed. Nothing was left but the lingering aura of the liturgical day, a vague attunement to its solemnity; and the sound of the party just kicking off, growing louder, close by.

Walking to my car, I could hear the music again – it was louder now, ecstatic, coming from a stage where colored lights glowed and electronic melodies pulsed. A different world altogether, it seemed.

If one draws out the contrast, between the church and the drug-centered festival, he can scarcely avoid being tempted – in the literal, religious sense of the word: to a self-flattering comparison between the two sides of the street; or at least some acidic social commentary, a head-shaking lament for society . . .

Yet that is precisely the trap, the desire of the devil, the goal of the powers that seek to corrupt what is best in us. For us, in the name of piety, to exalt ourselves over others on this day of utmost humility: that is Hell's desire, come in the name of religion; the demonic non serviam, disguised as the angelic serviam.

Baudelaire said Satan's greatest trick is "to persuade you that he does not exist." But I disagree. There is at least one greater trick: to bring the believer to the point where he expresses his pride through the language of piety. "God, I thank Thee that I am not like other men: extortioners, unjust, adulterers . . ."

In an instant, all of it – the Cross, the shroud, the tomb, the prayers and hymns invoking God's mercy – could become weapons of pride, blunt instruments to bludgeon others, a set of emblems signifying our supposed superiority. That is a far greater trick of the devil than merely hiding himself from view.

The devil's way with many Christians, is simply to get them to look down on others: to look across the street, at the partygoers on Good Friday, and take a merciless view. "What shamelessness! See how they

crucify Christ again: with their indifference to God, their hedonism, their empty pleasures . . ."

Such thoughts can be tempting. But another thought came to me that night, and seized my attention, for which I credit the Holy Spirit and not myself. About the people at the 420 celebration, I thought this:

"If we cannot offer them a greater joy – even today, on Good Friday! – than they believe they have found there, then we will never bring them into the Church."

But how is this to be done? Is it even true? Can we promise such people that there is more joy – not a greater quantity of superficial "happiness," but a deeper fulfillment of the heart and soul – on this supremely solemn liturgical day, than in a weekend of chemical revelry?

Indeed, we must ask: do we believe it ourselves? Do we trust that there is a greater joy to be found even in asceticism and renunciation – in our bearing of the Cross – than in a self-indulgent, worldly lifestyle? Or are Lent and Holy Week things we simply "get through," so we can celebrate later?

Joy, of course, is not mere happiness. To find the joy in all things, even painful and hard things, is a mark of sanctity; to be simply happy all the time is unhealthy and false. To "rejoice in the Lord always" is to trust and thank God perennially, in awareness of his steadfast love, regardless of our mood.

In this sense, there must certainly be more joy even in the darkness of Good Friday, than in anything offered by a drug-themed festival. We are more fortunate to suffer with God than to celebrate without him; for there can never be any greater fulfillment than to know God's love, and love him in return.

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann said this, about the Gospel's paradoxical joy:

"From its very beginning Christianity has been the proclamation of joy, of the only possible joy on earth. It rendered impossible all the joy we usually think of as possible. But within this impossibility, at the very bottom of this darkness, it announced and conveyed a new all-embracing joy, and with this joy it transformed the End into a Beginning."

It is one thing to believe this intellectually, and another thing to practice it.

That is the trouble. That is why we habitually fail in our evangelistic efforts: we fail to convey the joy of knowing Christ, because we have not based our own lives upon it. One cannot give what he does not have. How many of us have truly acquired the joy and peace of the Holy Spirit?

Saints are not superheroes or spiritual Olympians; a saint is an ordinary person who prefers God's love above everything, and sees everything through the lens of that love. God is Love; a saint is simply one who accepts and lives in that Supreme Reality. But how many of us even aspire to be saints, in that sense?

It is not a question of trying harder; no amount of brute force will suffice to sanctify us. It is a matter of changing our perspective: recognizing that there is only one source of ultimate, lasting joy – “the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus” – and then seeking it always, in all things, even in the depths of suffering.

St. Paul had more joy in a Roman prison than I have in my comfortable, safe existence. If he were here today, I would trust him to preach to the pot-smokers, to tell them there is more peace and fulfillment in the Church's mourning than in their celebration.

I would not readily trust myself to do it. I am not a reflection of the joy of the Gospel, not yet.

Easter Sunday was a gorgeous day in Denver, a day of rest after our traditional Byzantine Pascha celebration that began late Saturday night and stretched into Sunday morning. It was also the culmination of the 420 festivities downtown, with long lines at pizza shops and laid-back crowds in Civic Center Park.

I cannot look upon these two celebrations and see only a simplistic, black-and-white contrast between the righteous and the wicked. Nor can I see it as a matter of pure transcendent joy on the one side, and mere hedonism on the other. Both realities are more complex.

I believe that all people, in some form, have the experience of that profound joy which infinitely exceeds mere natural happiness. There are innate flaws and shortcomings in the human heart, limitations that no human effort can overcome; yet there is a longing for eternity, placed there by God himself, as well.

The joy of the Gospel is not something innate within us, or our world: the reality of Jesus breaks into our lives from the infinite Beyond, exceeding all reasonable expectations of the human mind. Yet there is a foretaste and an intimation of this joy, even in the lives of those who are ignorant or indifferent to him.

Christianity is the complete, definitive revelation of God and his love; but the experience of God is not

limited to Christians, or even to those who believe in God. I have seen Christ-like mercy in the face of an agnostic; I know people who – notwithstanding the tired cliché – truly are “spiritual though not religious.”

No doubt there were such people among the stoned crowds at Civic Center Park. The present cultural landscape is not easy to evaluate, spiritually speaking.

Some critics treat modern Western culture simply as a Manichean battleground between stalwart faith and godless hedonism. But a different picture emerges from the inner lives of individuals.

Inwardly, many people are haunted by the powerful but fleeting experience of the transcendent – and especially by the experience of a joy that seems “not of this world.” They seek, in vain, for its fulfillment among the finite things of creation: sex and drugs, money and power, family and friends, music and art.

Such people do not need to hear a litany of moral grievances from us. They need to hear something more like St. Augustine's advice in the Confessions (IV.12): “Seek what you seek, but not where you seek it.” Their most profound desire, planted within the heart by God, has been misdirected and gone astray.

Some of our substitutes for God are more disordered than others. But the fundamental problem is the same: we roam the world in search of that supreme joy whose scent we have caught, whose light we have glimpsed; but no finite thing provides more than a semblance of it for long.

Sin, of course, is a universal reality, and there is no question of viewing anyone – in the drug culture, or elsewhere – as a purely innocent victim of confusion. But as Thomas Merton noted, sin is an optimistic diagnosis: it presupposes that a corruption has entered into something originally and essentially good.

Something good, though profoundly corrupted, was at work among those who spent Good Friday and Easter celebrating marijuana.

I would like to show them that there is a better way: that there is a blessedness infinitely beyond all natural happiness and pleasure; that their mysterious desire – which cannot be satisfied by their chosen means, or any created thing – has a true object and an eternal satisfaction, found in God through Christ.

That is the joy of the Gospel. It is a message that can transform the world – as long as it first transforms us.

Benjamin Mann is a Byzantine Catholic, former journalist, and incurable philosopher. He is preparing to enter monastic life at Holy Resurrection Monastery in St. Nazianz, Wisconsin.

Robert George: The persecution has come, will you now abandon the Gospel?

BY JOHN-HENRY WESTEN

WASHINGTON, DC, May 15, 2014 (LifeSiteNews.com) – Celebrated Princeton Professor Robert P. George has publicly acknowledged the reality of persecution of pro-life and pro-family Christians.

His remarks were delivered at the prestigious National Catholic Prayer Breakfast, which has in past years addressed by President George W. Bush, and Vatican Cardinal Raymond Burke.

“The days of socially acceptable Christianity are over, the days of comfortable Catholicism are past,” began Prof. George. “It is no longer easy to be a faithful Christian, a good Catholic, an authentic witness to the truths of the Gospel. A price is demanded and must be paid,” he said.

Dr. George said it is specifically those who stand for sexual morality and the sanctity of life who are targeted, rather than those who merely profess Christianity.

“Of course, one can still safely identify oneself as a ‘Catholic,’ and even be seen going to Mass,” George said. “That is because the guardians of those norms of cultural orthodoxy that we have come to call ‘political correctness’ do not assume that identifying as ‘Catholic’ or going to Mass necessarily means that one actually believes what the Church teaches on issues such as marriage and sexual morality and the sanctity of human life.”

Dr. George, who was appointed to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom by the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives in 2012, said that it is still possible to be “safe” or a “comfortable Catholic” today “if one in fact does not believe what the Church teaches, or, for now at least, even if one does believe those teachings but is prepared to be completely silent about them.”

The religious freedom leader warned of the severe consequences awaiting those who will not yield to the pressure. “To be a witness to the Gospel today is to make oneself a marked man or woman,” he said.

It is to expose oneself to scorn and reproach. To unashamedly proclaim the Gospel in its fullness is to place in jeopardy one’s security, one’s personal aspirations and ambitions, the peace and tranquility one enjoys, one’s standing in polite society. One may in consequence of one’s public witness be discriminated against and denied educational opportunities and the prestigious credentials they may offer; one may lose valuable opportunities for employment and professional advancement; one may be excluded from

worldly recognition and honors of various sorts; one’s witness may even cost one treasured friendships. It may produce familial discord and even alienation from family members.

Hailed even in the *New York Times* as America’s “most influential conservative Christian thinker,” George’s startling wake-up call to Christian America is sending shock waves through the ranks of the nation’s social conservatives.

“Powerful forces and currents in our society press us to be ashamed of the Gospel—ashamed of the good, ashamed of our faith’s teachings on the sanctity of human life in all stages and conditions, ashamed of our faith’s teachings on marriage as the conjugal union of husband and wife,” he warned. “These forces insist that the Church’s teachings are out of date, retrograde, insensitive, uncompassionate, illiberal, bigoted, even hateful.”

“Am I prepared to pay the price that will be demanded if I refuse to be ashamed, if, in other words, I am prepared to give public witness to the massively politically incorrect truths of the Gospel,” he asked.

Calvary is here for the Christians in America, he suggested. “Easter is coming. And we, who cherish His Cross, and are willing to bear his suffering and shame, will share in his glorious resurrection.”

The Princeton professor concluded: “Yes, for us Catholics and all who seek to be faithful, it’s Good Friday. We are no longer acceptable. We can no longer be comfortable. It is for us a time of trial, a time of testing by adversity. But lest we fail the test, as perhaps many will do, let us remember that Easter is coming. Jesus will vanquish sin and death. We will experience fear, just as the apostles did—that is inevitable. Like Jesus himself in Gethsemane, we would prefer not to drink this cup. We would much rather be acceptable Christians, comfortable Catholics. But our trust in him, our hope in his resurrection, our faith in the sovereignty of his heavenly Father can conquer fear. By the grace of Almighty God, Easter is indeed coming. Do not be ashamed of the Gospel. Never be ashamed of the Gospel.”

The Catholic star-studded event was opened with prayer by Washington, D.C., Cardinal Donald Wuerl. The Papal nuncio to the United States, Archbishop Carlo Vigano, gave the benediction. Boston Cardinal Sean O’Malley, the only American on Pope Francis’ advisory council of eight cardinals, also gave an address.

Looking Ahead:

❖ May 25 – “Soup’s On” Sunday

God’s Extended Hand

FOCUS (Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve) has provided us with a special bin for collecting donations of clothing, toiletries, etc. to be distributed at GEH. It is located near the door of the church hall.

Please Note:

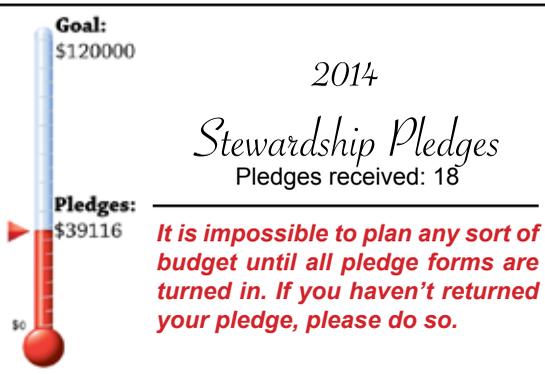
When you are away, please don’t forget that the church still relies on your contributions. Our bills do not go on vacation. Your absence on any Sunday does not negate your obligation to support your home parish.

Sunday offering for May 11

| Amount | Number |
|-----------|-----------|
| \$10.00 | 1 |
| \$15.00 | 1 |
| \$20.00 | 2 |
| \$25.00 | 1 |
| \$30.00 | 1 |
| \$35.00 | 1 |
| \$40.00 | 2 |
| \$49.00 | 1 (loose) |
| \$50.00 | 4 |
| \$75.00 | 1 |
| \$100.00 | 1 |
| \$125.00 | 1 |
| \$135.00 | 1 |
| \$300.00 | 2 |
| <hr/> | |
| \$1519.00 | |

Parishioner Total: \$1189.00
Visitor: \$330.00

Average / parish household (42): \$29.00
Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00
Deficit: **(\$936.00)**



Share 2014

We do not doubt the Resurrection of Christ, His gift of salvation to us all. How are we prepared to reciprocate for this most wondrous of gifts? Let us help our eparchy bring Christ’s salvation to others by making a contribution to **Share 2014 – Annual Eparchial Appeal.**

Ми не сумніваємося у Воскресінні Христа і Його дару для нашого спасіння. Як ми готові віддячити Йому за цей найчудовіший із всіх дарів? То ж допоможемо нашій єпархії принести Христове спасіння до інших внесок в **Share 2014 – Єпархіальний Заклик.**

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**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква
Святого Йоана Хрестителя
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Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church**

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The Samaritan Woman an Apostle and Evangelist

The Lord also uses the woman as an apostle, as it were, to those in the city. His words to her are so forceful that she leaves her water jar to go to the city and tells them to her fellow townspeople. I think there was a definite purpose why the Evangelist recorded that the woman left her water jar and went into the city. At the literal level, then, this shows the tremendous eagerness of the Samaritan woman, who forsakes her water jar and is more concerned for how she may benefit the multitude than for her more humble duty related to material things. For she was very benevolently moved and wished to announce the Christ to her fellow citizens by bearing witness to the One who told her "all I ever did." And she invites them to behold a man whose speech is greater than man, for His appearance to the eye was human.

So must we, too, therefore, forgetting things that are more material in nature and leaving them behind, be eager to impart to others the benefit of which we have been partakers. For by recording the woman's commendation for those capable of reading with understanding, the Evangelist challenges us to this goal.

Origen

As the apostles left their nets on being called, so she leaves her water jar to do the work of an evangelist by calling not one or two people, as Andrew and Philip did, but a whole city.

St. John Chrysostom