

NATIVITY OF THE FORERUNNER JOHN THE BAPTIST



Icon of the Nativity of John the Baptist -- June 24

June 24, 2012
FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
NATIVITY OF THE FORERUNNER AND BAPTIZER, JOHN
ALL SAINTS OF RUS'-UKRAINE

TONE 3

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 25 – JULY 1

THURSDAY, JUNE 28 – *TRANSLATION OF THE RELICS OF THE HOLY WONDERWORKERS AND UNMERCENARIES CYRUS AND JOHN*

5:30 PM – Great Vespers for Peter and Paul (*satisfies for obligation for Peter and Paul*)

FRIDAY, JUNE 29 – *THE HOLY, GLORIOUS, ALL-PRAISEWORTHY AND PREEMINENT APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL (OBLIGATORY FEAST)*

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners

SATURDAY, JUNE 30 – *APODOSIS OF STS. PETER AND PAUL. SYNAXIS OF THE TWELVE HOLY, GLORIOUS AND ALL-PRAISEWORTHY APOSTLES*

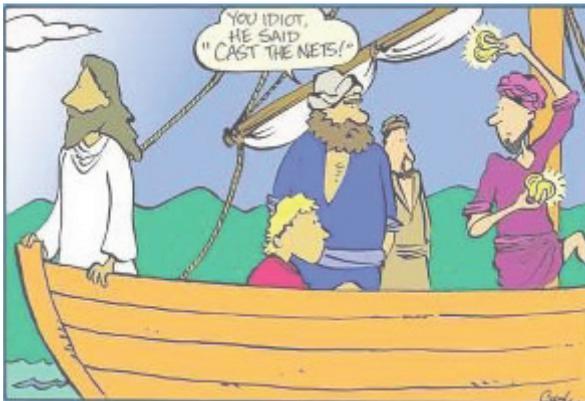
7:30 AM – Divine Liturgy / Panakhyda ✚ John Pasichny – 1st anniversary; Maria Hughes

5:30 PM – Great Vespers

SUNDAY, JULY 1 – *FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; THE HOLY WONDERWORKERS AND UNMERCENARIES COSMAS AND DAMIAN*

8:45 AM – Divine Praises

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners



Sunday offering for June 17

Amount	Number
\$5.00	1
\$10.00	1
\$13.00	1 (loose)
\$15.00	1
\$20.00	3
\$40.00	3
\$50.00	3
\$75.00	1
\$100.00	4
\$300.00	1
\$1148.00	19 Parishioners

Parishioner Total: \$1148.00

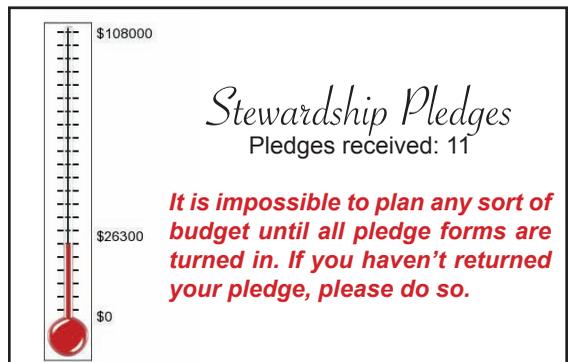
Average / parish household (39): \$29.44

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00

Shortfall: (\$977.00)

Please Note:

When you go on vacation, please don't forget that the church still relies on your contributions. Our bills do not go on vacation. The summer months are most difficult due to the decrease in attendance. Your absence on any Sunday does not negate your obligation to support your home parish.



John The Baptist Relics Dated To 1st Century

By RAPHAEL SATTER 06/15/12 12:54 PM ET AP

LONDON -- It's a tantalizing find in a Biblical mystery – Oxford University researchers have concluded that a set of skeletal remains which many Bulgarians attribute to John the Baptist probably belonged to a first century male from the Middle East.

While that doesn't prove that the bones belonged to the man revered by Christians as the forerunner to Jesus, it does mean that those who believe the relics are the remains of the first century saint have a scientific case.

The discovery of a sarcophagus containing a knuckle bone, a tooth, a skull fragment and other remains under an ancient church on an island off Bulgaria's coast – paired with a small urn bearing a Greek-language reference to John the Baptist – drew enormous interest when it was announced two years ago.

Officials didn't wait for scientific evaluation before offering the relics up for public view; thousands waited for hours to catch a glimpse of the bones when they were displayed in Sofia, Bulgaria's capital.

Oxford professor Thomas Higham, whose lab subjected the bone fragments to radiocarbon dating and DNA sequencing, said he was skeptical at first.

“We didn't expect results that would be consistent with the expected – or hoped for – results of our Bulgarian colleagues,” he said in a telephone interview. But he promised that the find, which has yet to be peer-reviewed, would stand up to scrutiny.

“We're very confident about the genetics,” he said.

According to Christian tradition, John the Baptist

foresaw the coming of Jesus and baptized him in the River Jordan. The ascetic desert-wandering prophet was later imprisoned and beheaded after criticizing the ruler of Galilee, Herod Antipas.

Higham's Oxford colleague Georges Kazan, who has traced the tortured history of John the Baptist's remains, said it was possible that his relics could have ended up under the fourth century monastery on St. Ivan's Island (Ivan is the Slavic word for John.)

Nearby Constantinople – now known as Istanbul – was then at the center of the Christian world and the surrounding area was “full of monks and holy relics,” he said. St. Ivan's Island, along an important Black Sea trade route, would have been made sense as a place to store the saint's bones.

Then again, Kazan said he had identified more than 25 purported relics of John the Baptist scattered across the world, including 11 purporting to come from his head. Most appear to be bone fragments – i.e. part of a jaw – although some pieces are large enough that they they're unlikely to be from the same person.

Higham said that, inevitably, some of the relics wouldn't stand up to scientific scrutiny.

“There are about eight or nine skulls of John the Baptist out there,” he said. “They can't be all John the Baptist.”

Higham's research was funded with a grant from National Geographic, whose channel is due to air a documentary on the find, entitled “Head of John the Baptist,” this Sunday.

Associated Press Writer Veselin Toshkov in Sofia, Bulgaria contributed to this report.

Continued from last week...

DESCENT

The winning of souls calls in the first place for humility: descent. The first virtue that the apostle must have if he would influence his contemporaries is disinterestedness.

What is an apostle? Etymology tells us that he is one who is sent, *ἀπόστολος*, one who comes in the name of another, who comes not to speak of himself, not to plead his own cause, but to speak of another, to plead the cause of another, another who is understood to be greater than himself; the apostle comes to speak of God, to plead the cause of God.

In what terms does St Paul explain the part that he and his fellow-labourers are to play in the apostolate? Set apart to preach the Gospel¹, he says. Dispensers of the mysteries of God². And, still more briefly, God's helpers³, God's fellow-workers. The apostles are not to preach themselves. No, not at all.

It is Christ that we preach⁴. For Christ we are ambassadors⁵. St Peter's motto is the same: if any man speak let him speak as of the words of God⁶.

And Our Lord Himself, in the Parable of the Sower, gives us to understand that he that goes forth to sow, is there to sow the seed; he has to cast the seed to the four winds, seed which is not something of his own substance, but which comes from without. If you sow human seed you will never get a divine fruit; only from the divine seed will the divine plant grow. And when the good Master sends forth His apostles to teach all nations and to baptize, He tells them that they are to do this "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."⁷

What you distribute, He says to them, distribute gratuitously; give freely, seeking no personal advantage or renown.

It is a wonderful thing that God should have made use of other men to address Himself to mankind; that He should not have contented

Himself with acting within the souls of men, in the intimate recesses of their consciences. It is a wonderful thing that Christ, to awaken human beings to the truth of the Gospel, should have vouchsafed to make use of "beaten air," to entrust His thoughts and His love to men, giving them the task of transmitting them to their brethren: Faith comes through hearing: the great majority will come to the light of truth only by making use of that instrument of Providence, the preacher of the Gospel. "Jesus," wrote Péguy, "has placed himself at a great disadvantage; he has placed himself at the disadvantage of standing in need of us."

They will be chosen men, it is true; God will carefully select the official ministers of the Word. He will fit them by a special training for their apostolic work; they will be qualified men. The Church will have a body of teachers whose official function it will be to distribute the truth; they are the priests.

Meanwhile let us not fail to pay our tribute of admiration to this wondrous creation of Our Saviour, the priesthood. What a difference there is between the priest and the layman! ... The layman may indeed be a channel of grace in a certain manner, by his devotion, his charity, his self-sacrifice, his self-denial. But what is this compared with the power of the priest, who by baptism can make God enter into the soul and by penance restore Him; compared with the power of the priest at the bedside of the dying? The layman may help to prepare a soul for grace; he cannot confer it. The layman may help to dispose a soul for pardon; only the priest can grant absolution ...

This is not to say that the priest alone is commanded to be an apostle. No, the laity also, especially at the present day when vocations to the priesthood are so few in this country,⁸ are called to work for the salvation of their brethren.

What qualities do they need especially for this work? In the first place they need the deep humility of the man who seeks not to publish himself, but strives to disappear entirely behind the One whom he wants to preach.

Look at St John the Baptist. Men came to seek him, thinking that perhaps he was the Messiah.

1 Rom. i, I.
2 I Cor. iv, I
3 I Cor. iii, 9.
4 I Cor. i, 23.
5 2 Cor. v. 20.
6 I Pet. iv, II.
7 Matt. xxviii, 19.

8 France.

No. He, John the Baptist, is not worthy even to loosen the sandals of the Master and Saviour. "See," he says, "there is the Messiah." And he points to a man clad in a *burnous*, who comes forth from the desert. It is to Him that he sends his hearers and his disciples: "He must increase, but I must decrease."⁹ A wonderful example of disinterestedness.

Andrew had been privileged to approach the Lord; he tells his brother Simon: "We have seen the Messiah." He does not add: "You need not go to Him; I will tell you all about Him." No, he invites Simon to come in person and see the Master: "He brought him to Jesus."¹⁰

It is not for the intermediary to seek his own advantage and glory. It is his duty to show the way to the Master, and then, to disappear.

Look at St Paul. What is his aim? To make Christ reach the measure of the perfect man, by gathering together as many disciples as possible for the Saviour, and by leading them to the highest possible degree of evangelical perfection. And what part does St Paul ask for himself in this enterprise? Work? Yes, decidedly. Glory? Not at all. *I know nothing but Jesus*. Paul is nothing. It is Jesus only that counts.

Better still, we have the magnificent example of Our Lord Himself, who shows us how disinterestedness can win souls. What does the Saviour seek? He seeks to win love for His Father. For Him that is everything ; He wants nothing else. The Father, the Father, it is always of the Father that He speaks; so much so that one day Philip says to Him: "Lord, show us the

Father." His mission is to speak to the world the words which the Father has committed to Him to speak to the world: "The Father is greater than I. ..." ¹¹ "The words that I speak to you I speak not of myself"¹²; and when the Apostles ask Him to teach them how to pray, Our Lord teaches them the Our Father, in which there is no mention of Him at all. Everything goes to the Father. We might multiply texts to illustrate this; here are a few:

"The Son cannot do anything of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing."

9 John iii, 30.

10 John i, 42.

11 John xiv, 28.

12 John xiv, 10.

"As the Father hath life in himself, so he hath given to the Son also to have life in himself. And he hath given him power to do judgement."

"I cannot of myself do anything. As I hear so I judge I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me."

"The works which the Father hath given me to perfect, the works themselves which I do, give testimony of me that the Father hath sent me."

"I am come in the name of my Father."¹³

"He that sent me is with me; and he hath not left me alone. For I do always the things that please him."¹⁴

"I came not of myself, but he sent me."¹⁵

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Hence the first condition of an effective apostolate is to work, not for oneself, but for God, for Christ.

But working for God, for Christ, may be understood in a thousand ways. The only good way is to love the cause you have espoused, and love it with all your heart.

Zeal, if it is to be truly called zeal, must be a passion, a noble sort of jealousy; a zeal of flame and fire. We must hunger and thirst after justice, we must be tormented at the thought of those who suffer: "I have pity on the multitude." Not a pity which is mere sentiment, mere words, but a pity which is active, genuine, and therefore effective. Not in word nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

When souls appreciate that he who wishes them well is in the first place absolutely disinterested, and secondly is desirous of their perfection, then they allow themselves to be approached; they are won by warmth as a warm stream melts an iceberg. Anything else can be resisted; but you cannot resist a burning zeal, if that zeal, as we have said, is disinterested, and if it is, as we shall say later, enlightened.

Who can measure the good that was done, for example, through the ardent charity of a Pierre Poyet or an Antoine Martel. Poyet, unable to convert one of his companions at the Ecole Normale Superieure, wrote: "Christ seemed to say to me this morning: 'It depends solely upon you whether this soul will be saved, whether

13 John v, 19-47.

14 John viii, 29.

15 John viii, 42.

it will believe in Me and love Me. Will your faith and your love be great enough to win it? I trembled with terror before this responsibility: the salvation of a soul.” And at another time: “I should like to be a generosity merchant, and I am looking for associates.”

Antoine Martel, a brilliant graduate, professor of Slavonic literature at the University of Lille, in a paper on the subject of “Charity and the professional virtues,” wrote as follows:

“To live charity means, above all, to have the spirit of service, the spirit that makes us ready to spare others pain and render them service, even though it may cost us a part of our own resources: money, time, health, intelligence, powers of action. We are one of God’s hands: the hand that works from without, while the other acts from within. We can to a great extent remove from the hearts of our brethren that which obstructs their approach to God. The only thing that can deliver us from our obstinate human illusions is a long exposure of our hearts to the truths of the Gospel.”

He reproaches himself with having to write on Charity, instead of living it. And yet what love he showed for his brethren! He wanted to go back to Russia, where he had already been for purposes of study. What drew him to return? Was it curiosity, the desire of learning? Above all it was “sympathy” in the best sense of the word, the desire to suffer with those whose suffering he well understood. . . . : “I feel this great people suffering,”¹⁶ he wrote, “and I think I should rejoice to share its unhappiness, willingly to endure the evils which it is forced to bear. It is this, rather than the feeling that I should be able to bring them any help or comfort. I should be lost, powerless. Suppose that this desire to share the sufferings of one who suffers is an unmixed desire. What do you think of it? From a strictly rational standpoint it is absurd. And yet there is something in the human soul (not only in the Christian soul) which says that sympathy may sometimes be exactly what the words mean etymologically: ‘suffering with.’ This desire to share the suffering of one who is in distress, may include that desire for suffering which so many saintly souls have had, simply

because they knew that their Beloved, Our Lord, had undergone martyrdom, that He continued to suffer in His Mystical Body, that He ‘was in agony until the end of the world.’ Is this not a supreme proof of love? “

In this passage Martel touches upon the ultimate reasons for devoting oneself to the salvation of souls. We must love souls for three reasons especially: because every soul represents some (perhaps much) fruit of the Blood of Christ; because every soul is a factor (perhaps a very important one) in the coming of the kingdom of God; because in doing good to a soul we do good to Christ in His Mystical Body.

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If it is truly not his own cause that he is pleading, but God’s, then the apostle, precisely because he is sure of the truth which he preaches, because he is in firm and conscious possession of the formula of salvation, will assert that truth with calm. And nothing is more convincing than the apostle’s calm and uncompromising manner, his tranquil assurance, that absence of prevarication and inconsistency: “Thus it is, and not otherwise.” And whatever you do or say not one iota will he change: “Let your speech be yea, yea, nay, nay.” What is, is ; what is not, is not. In this Our Lord was our great model.

We like people to assert, we like people who give the impression of sureness, so that if they say anything it means that this is so, and they will not go back upon it. There are so many that use shifts and evasions, trying to convey the impression of subtlety, but really being uncertain of themselves. You will not win adherents by cleverness; you may gain a concession, you will not win admiration.

Even when Jesus saw that He offended His hearers, yet He persisted in His statements. His message, the good tidings, came from above; whatever happened He would transmit that message intact; and, even though it may protest and refuse to submit, the world likes it so.

Many of the teachings of the Saviour ran counter to the current opinions of the time; whether it was a question of the requirements of charity, the forgiveness of injuries, or the pardon accorded to repentance; whether it was a question of the predominance of the internal

motive (the simple eye) over the soulless practice of external rites, or the danger of riches, or the pharisaical spirit, Our Lord never attenuated His doctrine. It was the same in the matter of the Real Presence, the eternity of the pains of hell, the doctrine of the strait way and the narrow gate. "This saying is hard," said many of His hearers, and went away. But see, on the other hand, the confidence of those who remained faithful; see how, when the hour came, they gave evidence of their attachment to this Master of unparalleled assurance, even by the shedding of their blood.

And St Paul, after the example of his Master, knew how to be assertive when it was necessary. He had been accused of appealing to the resurrection of the dead, and on that account he was cited to appear before the Jewish Council. Did he attempt to evade the issue? On the contrary he faced it: "Men brethren . . . concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." And his frankness, far from resulting in his downfall, gained him the favour of the multitude: "We find no evil in this man ! "

Young people especially like courage. A young naval ensign had lost his rosary. "Whom does this thing belong to ?" asked a comrade who had found it. "To me," replied the owner. Did they jeer at him, did he lose anything in their esteem? On the contrary. He became thenceforth the refuge of any of his comrades who happened to be in trouble.

Nobody admires the half-hearted giver. Our Lord did not. A judicious mixture of courage and cowardice is odious; what is neither hot nor cold, but tepid, He vomits out of His mouth.

"There is no giving in to evil," wrote Claudel, "there is no giving in to deceit. There is only one thing to do with what is evil, and that is to destroy it." And Vigny : "Any man who has ideas and does not form them into a complete system is an incomplete man." And Goethe, more briefly still: "If you have seen a man who is a complete whole, you have seen a great thing."

People like to see men, as they say, "all of a piece," that is, consistent. Why are they so rare? In the case of many of the baptized, to use the cruel saying of Henri Heine, "the waters of baptism dry quickly." What a pity, and what a

shame! How many there are who would like to have a part of themselves not baptized! Or rather, how many there are who act as though one or other part of their being had not been touched by the sacred waters! But what a joy on the contrary, to find a person who is truly one, fully logical and consistent, in whom all is marked with the baptismal seal!

"What is your name? " asked the Roman governor, Rictiovar, of the young Quirinus.

"My name? Christian is my name." Nor could they extract any other answer

from him. He might have explained that his name was Quirinus. But he chose a better: *Christian*.

"Are you a member of the sacred band? Are you a follower of Christ?" I can imagine two answers,¹⁷ one of them the bold, courageous reply: "Yes, of course I am ! " ; the other, the answer of the coward: "Well, you see how it is; somebody persuaded me, and I did not like to refuse."

We are familiar with this second reply: does it not recall the answer of a certain apostle, when he was accosted by a servant girl, on the night of Our Lord's arrest: "Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. But he denied, saying; I neither know nor understand what thou sayest."

Which of the two attitudes, the courageous or the evasive, is the more to be admired?

We may remark also that when Christ asserts His identity He makes no compromise: "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed God? - I am."¹⁸ "I am," nothing more—that is enough.

"You call me Master and Lord. And you say well; for so I am."¹⁹

The apostle must imitate the Master. But in his uncompromising firmness, if it is to be convincing, there must enter no element of self. It is not the person who speaks, but what is said, that matters.

17 We have young men particularly in mind. Indeed it is for them that these pages were first written. Each reader must draw his own conclusions according to his own particular case.

18 Mark, xiv, 61, 62.

19 John xiii, 13.



**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква
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Sermon by St. Augustine of Hippo

The Church observes the birth of John as in some way sacred. And, you will not find any other of the great men of old whose birth we celebrate officially. We celebrate John's, as we celebrate Christ's. This point cannot be passed over in silence, and if I may not perhaps be able to explain it in the way that such an important matter deserves, it is still worth thinking about it a little more deeply and fruitfully than usual. John is born of an old woman who is barren; Christ is born of a young woman who is a virgin. That John will be born is not believed, and his father is struck dumb; that Christ will be born is believed, and He is conceived by faith.

John, it seems, has been inserted as a kind of boundary between the two Testaments, the Old and the New. That he is somehow or other a boundary is something that the Lord himself indicates when He says the law and the prophets were until John. So he represents the old and heralds the new. Because he represents the old, he is born of an elderly couple; because he represents the new, he is revealed as a prophet in his

mother's womb.

Finally, he is born, he receives a name, and his father's tongue is loosed. Zachary is struck dumb and loses his voice, until John, the Lord's forerunner, is born and releases his voice for him. What does Zachary's silence mean, but that prophecy was obscure and, before the proclamation of Christ, somehow concealed and shut up? It is released and opened up by his arrival, it becomes clear when the One who was being prophesied is about to come. The releasing of Zachary's voice at the birth of John has the same significance as the tearing of the veil of the Temple at the crucifixion of Christ. If John were meant to proclaim himself, he would not be opening Zachary's mouth. The tongue is released because a voice is being born – for when John was already heralding the Lord, he was asked, who are you and he replied I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. John is the voice, but the Lord in the beginning was the Word. John is a voice for a time, but Christ is the eternal Word from the beginning.