

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
SEVENTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW



Icon of Healing Two Blind Men

July 31, 2011
7TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Tone 6

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF AUGUST 1 - AUGUST 7

SUNDAY, AUGUST 7 – 8TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners



Fr. James will be away from July 29 - August 6. In case of an emergency please contact either Fr. Robert Pipta of Holy Angels Byzantine Catholic Church at (858) 277-2511 or Fr. Sabba Shofany of St. Jacob Melkite Catholic Mission at (619) 410-7868.

Divine Liturgy next Sunday, August 7th will be celebrated at the normal time of 9:30 AM

Mark your calendars: On Sunday, August 28 following the Divine Liturgy, there will be a parish meeting. Please plan to attend.

Feast of Transfiguration: August 6 is the feast of Transfiguration. There **will not** be a Divine Liturgy here due to Fr. James' absence. You are encouraged to attend the Divine Liturgy at 9:00 AM at Holy Angels Byzantine Catholic Church at 2235 Galahad Road, San Diego, CA 92123. Fruit will be blessed there after the Liturgy.

On Sunday, August 7, we, too, will bless fruits after the Divine Liturgy to commemorate this feast.

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.

Dormition Fast – August 1-14th

Each year the Church observes a 2 week fast from August 1st through 15th, the Dormition (or "Falling Asleep") of the Mother of God. This great feast is called the Summer Pascha as it commemorates the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of the Virgin Mary.

August 1 - Feast of the Procession of the Holy, Precious and Lifegiving Cross

WHY DO WE WEAR A CROSS?

adapted from Orthodox.net

In pre-Christian times, the Cross was the instrument of a shameful and horrible death. The Romans invented it and used it in order to intimidate the peoples whom they had subjugated. Everyone looked on this instrument of execution the shameful Cross with horror.

But a remarkable change took place with respect to the Cross after Our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified on it. The Lord suffered and died on the Cross. He took horrible sufferings upon Himself in order to save us from sins. The Cross received great glory, such as no other object made by the hands of man has possessed. The Cross became the sign of our salvation, through which we receive the power of God the grace of God.

The Cross is the first and greatest Christian sacred object. When the priest sanctifies water, he immerses the Cross in it, and the water becomes holy. When we wear the Cross on our chest, our body constantly touches it, and from this touch it, too, is sanctified. The Cross that we wear protects us from danger.

In Communist Ukraine, believing people would wear a Cross at great risk, since there could be much unpleasantness from the godless for this. But these remarkable people were not afraid to confess their faith, and they would fearlessly wear a Cross. One ought not to look upon the Cross as some kind of jewelry like a bracelet or brooch. The Cross must adorn our soul and not our clothing, and must constantly remind us that we are Christians, called to live according to our faith, which is founded on the Savior's sufferings on the Cross.

The Divine Liturgy:

Our Invitation to a Special Feast

The Divine Liturgy is an invitation to a special banquet or feast. God is the host of the banquet, and He invites everyone to attend. He invites you, your family and all Christians whom you know. We must all be present: Jesus Christ, God's Son, is the guest of honor at this feast, and He always comes whenever two or more are gathered to pray in His Name.

Why must we come to this banquet? First of all, God invites us so that He can show us how much He loves us. God has done everything in His power to bring us to Heaven. He has sent us His only Son for our salvation. By coming to the liturgy, we are able to receive the full benefit of God's love for us. At the Holy Eucharist God's love for us is made into the food and drink of eternal life. We receive Holy Communion. Can we refuse to come to this spiritual banquet after God has prepared for us such generous gifts?

Another reason for coming to the Liturgy is to show God how much we love Him. When we think of the many blessings God has given us, we know that we have much for which to be thankful. The food we eat, the air we breathe, the grass on which we play, the trees, the mountains - all of these things come to us from God. He is the giver of all good things. When we pray to Him and worship Him, He gives us also spiritual blessings - love, kindness, joy, goodness and many others. For all these things we express our thanks to God in the Liturgy. "Eucharist" means to offer thanks to God (thanksgiving).

We also come to this banquet to celebrate the Death and Resurrection of Christ until He returns again. The whole Church and the world await the return of Jesus. We know that when He comes back, He will establish His Kingdom forever. Until that time arrives, we must prepare ourselves, remembering His crucifixion, burial and the resurrection on the third day. We must always be ready, for the Lord may return sooner than we think.

What must we bring with us to the Liturgy? As in any banquet, we must bring gifts as an expression of our esteem for the One who is being honored. First of all, we bring ourselves. Secondly, we bring bread and wine which become

Holy Communion by the power of God's grace. Thirdly, we bring an offering of money for the work of God and the Church.

At the Liturgy our gifts are blessed by God, He receives them and returns them to us as blessings. Especially the bread and wine that we bring, for example, which is changed into the Body and Blood of His Son Jesus. This is given to us to receive as Holy Communion for the forgiveness of our sins and for our salvation. Whatever we offer to God, He always receives and gives it back to us as a blessing. The most exciting moment at the Liturgy occurs when we pray to the Holy Spirit to change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.

We, too, share in this high point of the Liturgy by receiving Holy Communion. Unfortunately, some of the people who are invited to the banquet do not share in this great moment. Without realizing it, they do not fully participate in the banquet. Without knowing it, they insult the guest of honor. How would we feel if everyone who was invited, let us say, to our birthday party refused to eat anything from the birthday table? The guest of honor, Jesus Christ, expects all of us to receive from His table His Body and Blood, which are the greatest gifts we have on earth.

Like many other banquets, we leave the Liturgy with a good feeling inside, remembering all the good things that happened to us. We recall God's love for us and the many blessings that we have received from Him. We also remember the presents that we gave to Him as expressions of our love and how He transforms them into something very special for us. Just thinking about the good things that have happened to us at the Liturgy causes us to look ahead to its next celebration. In the mean time, we must make the joyful experience of this feast a part of our daily lives. How? By using the love we receive from God in our relationships and dealings with all people. This divine love unites us as members of the Church. It leads us to serve each other and to help other people. It also prepares us for the greatest banquet God is making ready for us: the Kingdom of Heaven.

– from *The Joyful Feast* by John Chakos



**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква
Святого Йоана Хрестителя
St. John the Baptizer
Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church**

4400 Palm Avenue
La Mesa, CA 91941
Parish Office: (619) 697-5085

Website: stjohnthebaptizer.org

Pastor: Fr. James Bankston **Парох:** о. Яків Бенкстон
frjames@mac.com

Fr. James' cell phone: (619) 905-5278

They Saw Because They Believed

At that point, two blind men follow the Lord as He was passing by. But if they could not see, how could the blind men know of the Lord's departure as well as His name? Moreover, they called him "Son of David" and asked to be made well. In the two blind men, the entire earlier pre-figuration is complete. The ruler's daughter seems to be from these people, namely, the Pharisees and John's disciples, who already made common cause in testing the Lord.

To these unknowing persons the law gave evidence as to the one from whom they sought a cure. It indicated to them that their Savior in the flesh was of the line of David. It also introduced light to the minds of those who

were blind from past sins. They could not see Christ but were told about Him.

The Lord showed them that faith should not be expected as a result of health but health should be expected because of faith. The blind men saw because they believed; they did not believe because they saw. From this we understand that what is requested must be predicated on faith and that faith must not be exercised because of what has been obtained. If they should believe, He offers them sight. And He charges the believers to be silent, for it was exclusively the task of the Apostles to preach.

St. Hilary of Poitiers