

SUNDAY AFTER THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS



*Icon of the Holy Cross -- September 14th*

# September 15, 2013

## SUNDAY AFTER THE EXALTATION OF THE CROSS – TONE 8 THE HOLY GREAT MARTYR NICETAS, THE GOth

### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 16 – SEPTEMBER 22

**Please Note:** There will be NO Vespers during the Summer months unless noted in the bulletin.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22 – 18th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; THE HOLY HIEROMARTYR PHOCAS, BISHOP OF SINOPE; THE HOLY PROPHET JONAH; THE VENERABLE PRIEST JONAH, FATHER OF STS. THEOPHANES THE HYMNOGRAPHER AND THEODORE THE BRANDED

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

For All Parishioners

### Parish Picnic

Today following the Divine Liturgy.

It will take place in Collier Park across the street from the Church. We will have hamburgers, hotdogs, drinks.... And we ask each family to bring one dish to share that will serve 8 people. There will be activities for all. Bring your lawn chairs.

Cost: 10 years of age and younger \$2.00  
11 and up - \$5.00

### Празник – Parish Feast

Mark your calendars. On Sunday, October 6, we will celebrate the feast of Покров – The Holy Protection of the Mother of God. Tickets will be available in the church hall after Divine Liturgy. Ticket prices: Adults - \$15.00; school-aged children (11-17) - \$8.00; children 10 and under – Free. We need help to set up for the Praznyk Celebration in the Church Hall. We also need help with serving and with clean up following the celebration.

*He who busies himself with the sins of other, or judges his brother on suspicion, has not yet even begun to repent or to examine himself so as to discover his own sins.*

– St. Maximos the Confessor

### Special Parish Survival Strategy Meeting

Mark your calendars!

On Sunday, September 22nd, there will be an important Special Meeting of the Parish Body to discuss urgent issues related to the immediate future of the parish. All parish members are asked to attend.

### Looking Ahead

- Sunday, 9/22: Special Parish Meeting
- Sunday, 10/6: Pokrov Celebration



*“We must be super-conservative in preserving the Orthodox faith, but super-modern in propagating it.”*

– St. Nikolai Velimerovich

*“If, O Christian, you will always take up the Cross of Christ on yourself as a help, then NO evil shall come towards you, nor any distress shall afflict your life: for all adverse powers will be crushed beneath the sign of the image of the Cross.”*

– St. Ephraim the Syrian

## CONQUERING FEAR

Written by the Very Rev. Vladimir Berzonsky

*“Then Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’ And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” (John 20:21).*

This alone if nothing else one realizes and takes away from the Divine Liturgy—the peace of Christ. This makes it worth every effort to be present among Christ’s loved ones. Who is more fright-filled than those Galileans in Jerusalem on the day when Jesus Christ had been crucified, and they were certain that they were next. Trembling with fear, expecting at any moment for the door to be broken in and to be driven away for execution – suddenly He appears, not through the door but in their midst. He was there all the time, or rather there in their presence incognito. That even ought to inspire all of us, especially when we are afraid.

The great spiritual lay writer Paul Evdokimov wrote: “A lay person is also one who is freed by his faith from ‘the great fear’ of the bomb, of cancer, of Communism, of death. The faith of such a person is always a way of loving the world, a way of following the Lord even into hell.” (*Ages of the Spiritual Life*, p. 242) Yes, that was the last century. Today we no longer fear Communism, thank the Lord, but we have exchanged fears. Then our presidents thought to protect the USA with a defense shield that would prevent attacks from beyond our borders. Now we have become fearful of attacks within our land. Consider the exercises we go through to take a flight. We arrive at least an hour before scheduled takeoff, are sure to have an official photo image, have tickets in our name, baggage all vetted, then computers, coats, even shoes are sent through the screening apparatus, there is the possibility of a body search, and we are told to be suspicious of our fellow passengers. When out walking or jogging after dark, I cross over to the other side of the street if I notice a woman ahead of me alone, lest I startle her and cause her anxiety.

Add to that road rage, the expression of pent-up hostility that people behind steering wheels vent on other vehicles as if the highways and streets were fields of combat and the drivers were the enemy. This is life in the new millennium.

You may find temporary relief from pills from the drug store’s shelves, even stronger with a physician’s prescription. However, you will discover the glorious lasting peace offered by our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ, a peace transcending anything the world has to offer, by clearing your mind and heart from the clutter of remembered offenses done to you with the help of the Holy Spirit within your soul, sweeping away

all the detritus of hurts no longer in your power to react to, and thank Christ for the overwhelming gift of affection symbolized in the Cross. Then while you are in Church, forget your watch and what is going on around you. Learn to imbibe the peace of God that surpasses the ability to understand what God is doing for you and with your acceptance. Even if it lasts but a moment, try to cling to it, thank

Him for the feeling, and strive to keep it with you as long as you are able, as you return to the challenges of the world outside.

As the choir sings “Lay aside all earthly cares,” you may imagine yourself wafting upward where the angels and saints hover above. The Spirit is like the helium in a balloon within you – let it fill you with peace. Your cares are like the heavy sand bags, weighing you down and preventing your ascent. Cut them off. You can see the priest ahead of you taking into the sacred altar the precious gifts of Jesus Christ Himself, offered by Him for the life of the world, and He invites you to proceed with Him. What’s holding you back? Are you enslaved to the wrongs, insults and injuries inflicted on you by the world, or do you belong to His Kingdom? If the latter, then don’t dally. Go with Him.



## On Sin and the Will of God

*By St. Anthony the Great*

Things that are done according to nature aren't sins, but those done by choice; it's not a sin to eat, so that the body will be properly maintained in life without any evil thought, but it is to eat without gratitude and improperly and without restraint; neither is it a sin to look with chastity, but it is a sin to look with envy, pride and desire; it is not a sin to listen quietly, but it is with anger. It's not a sin to let the tongue be unrestrained in thanksgiving and prayer, but it is to speak evil; to not let your hands do acts of mercy, but to commit murder and theft. So each of our members sins if it does evil instead of good, doing things its own way and not according to the will of God.

---

*“Those who live judging their neighbor, speaking ill of their neighbor, are hypocrites, because they lack the strength and the courage to look to their own shortcomings. The Lord does not waste many words on this concept. Further on he says that he who has hatred in his heart for his brother is a murderer. In his first letter, John the Apostle also says it clearly: anyone who has hatred for his brother is a murderer, he walks in darkness, he who judges his brother walks in darkness.*

*A Christian murderer.... It's not me saying this, it's the Lord. And there is no place for nuances. If you speak ill of your brother, you kill your brother. And every time we do this, we are imitating that gesture of Cain, the first murderer in History.*

*Go and pray for that person! Go and do penance for that person! And then, if it is necessary, speak to that person who may be able to seek remedy for the problem. But don't tell everyone! Paul had been a sinner, and he says of himself: 'I was once a blasphemer, a persecutor, a violent man. But I have been mercifully treated'. Perhaps none of us are blasphemers – perhaps... But if we ever gossip we are certainly persecutors and violent. We ask for grace so that we and the entire Church may convert from the crime of gossip to love, to humility, to meekness, to docility, to the generosity of love towards our neighbor.”*

*– Pope Francis (9/3/2013)*

## Sunday offering for September 1

Amount	Number
\$10.00	2
\$15.00	1
\$20.00	1
\$25.00	1
\$30.00	1 (loose)
\$40.00	3
\$75.00	2
\$80.00	1
\$100.00	3
\$130.00	1
<hr/>	
\$890.00	

Parishioner Total: \$845.00

Visitor Total: \$45.00

Average / parish household (42): \$20.12

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00

Shortfall: **-\$1280.00**

---

## Sunday offering for September 8

Amount	Number
\$5.00	1
\$15.00	1
\$20.00	1
\$30.00	1
\$33.00	1 (loose)
\$40.00	5
\$45.00	1
\$100.00	3
\$125.00	1
\$200.00	1
<hr/>	
\$1038.00	

Parishioner Total: \$953.00

Visitor Total: \$85.00

Average / parish household (42): \$22.69

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00

Shortfall: **-\$1172.00**

### **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.

## CLOSER TO GOD: MONK WHO LIVES ON TOP OF A 131-FOOT PILLAR

*From Catholic.org*

*Maxime Qavtaradze, a 59-year-old Orthodox monk, has taken his devotion to God - to new heights - literally. Fr. Maxime has lived a life of virtual solitude on top of a pillar high above his Georgian monastery for 20 years.*

LOS ANGELES, CA - When he wants to leave the Katskhi Pillar, he spends 20 minutes getting down a 131-foot ladder. Supplies are winched up to him by his followers. He only comes down twice a week to pray with his followers.



Having worked as a crane operator before taking his orders in 1993, Fr. Maxime has always had a head for heights. "It is up here in the silence that you can feel God's presence," he says. His only visitors are priests and a group of troubled young men who seek solace in the monastery at the foot of the pillar.

Photographer Amos Chapple paid a visit to Fr. Maxime. He was not at first allowed up onto the pillar. Chapple had to spend four days taking part in seven hours of daily prayers including a four hour stint from 2 a.m. until sunrise. Finally allowed to scale the "dicey" ladder to the top, he was worried that it might be too dark to get back down. Reaching the top, Fr. Maxime told Amos that he became a monk after a stretch in prison and decided he wanted to make a change.



He first slept in a refrigerator when he first moved to the top of the pillar. He now has a bed inside a cottage.

The Katskhi Pillar was used by stylites, Christians who lived on top of pillars to avoid worldly temptation until the 15th century when the practice was stopped following the Ottoman invasion of Georgia. For centuries the 131-foot high pillar lay abandoned and locals could only look up at the mysterious ruins at its summit.

A group led by the mountaineer Alexander Japaridze in 1944 made the first documented ascent of the pillar and discovered the remains of a chapel and the skeleton of a stylite who had reposed there. With the collapse of communism, and the resurgence of religion in Georgia, Fr.

Maxime decided to live atop the pillar in the way of the old stylites.

"When I was young I drank, sold drugs, everything. When I ended up in prison I knew it was time for a change. I used to drink with friends in the hills around here and look up at this place, where land met sky. We knew the monks had lived up there before and I felt great respect for them."

## ON OBEDIENCE AS A SHIELD AGAINST PRIDE

*By St. Nikolai Velimirovich*

He who desires to be saved must be absolutely obedient to spiritual authority. Without this obedience, a man can perish even with the greatest desire for salvation. The great saints, who prescribed obedience as the condition for salvation, also fulfilled the act of obedience to perfection. When St. Simeon chose the pillar for his asceticism, it struck the other ascetics as some kind of novelty. Because they did not know if this form of asceticism was of the Spirit of God or of the spirit of pride, the desert fathers sent spiritual men to determine the answer. The monks were to command Simeon in their name to come down from the pillar. If he did not want to come down, it would have meant that his elevation on the pillar was from the spirit of pride. But if he obeyed the command and began to descend, they were to leave him as he was, for his readiness to obey would show that his asceticism was from the Holy Spirit. When those sent arrived and told Simeon that the council of the holy fathers of the desert commanded him to descend from the pillar, Simeon immediately began to climb down the ladder. Seeing his obedience, they cried out to him rejoicing: "Do not come down, holy Father, but remain where you are. We see now that your asceticism is of God."

## **I Don't Get Anything Out of the Liturgy**

- As a priest I have heard this complaint countless times.
- The truth is that we do not come to church primarily to *get* something out of the liturgy.
- We come to the liturgy to *give* ourselves, our possessions, our whole being to Christ our God.
- That is what we do when we place ourselves on the holy table through the *prospora*, or altar bread which expresses the giving of our total life to God. Only if we first give ourselves to Christ our God, shall we be able to get something out of the liturgy.
- What we will get is the powerful, redeeming presence of the Lord Jesus.
- We shall then carry Him out of the church with us to bring Him as Christ-bearers to others.
- *Let us commit or relinquish ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.*
- The principle of **relinquishment** which is so much a part of the liturgy needs to be carried over into life and practiced in our everyday Christian living.
- It will change our lives.
- It will bring us the peace and power of God.

– Fr. Anthony Coniaris

## **How Relinquishment Works**

*Often in my prayers I have asked for what I thought was good, and persisted in my petition, stupidly trying to force the will of God, instead of leaving it to him to arrange things as He knows best. But afterwards on obtaining what I asked for, I was very sorry that I did not pray rather for God's will to be done; because the thing turned out to be different from what I expected.*

*What is good, except God? Then let us leave all our concerns to Him and all will be well.*

– Evagrius of Pontus

## **LIFE IS THAT TO WHICH WE COMMIT OURSELVES**

We need to remember that in life we are only as strong as that to which we commit ourselves.

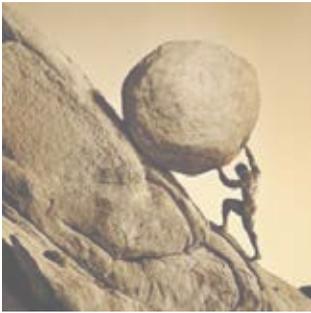
If we wish to cross the Atlantic Ocean and commit ourselves to a carton box, we shall be only as strong as that carton box. But if we commit ourselves to an ocean liner, we shall be as durable as that great ship. So it is in life.

If we commit ourselves to the all-powerful, immortal Christ, His power will become our power, His resurrection our resurrection, His peace our peace, His love our love.

*So, let us relinquish ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.*

## The Fine Line Between Working Hard and Letting Go

by Michael Hyatt



Some of my favorite memories of growing up are building model airplanes with my dad. I remember him showing me how to assemble, sand, and paint them. I think back

on how proud I always was when we finished a project together.

On one occasion, I remember struggling to get two parts to fit together. I tried several different angles. Nothing seemed to work. I grew increasingly frustrated.

Calmly, my dad said,

*“Son, don’t force it.”*

I stopped what I was doing, looked up at him, and instantly knew he was right.

I relaxed, set down the parts, and started working on some other aspect of the project. An hour later, I returned to the obstinate parts and clicked them into place.

Life is often like that, isn’t it?

You do your best, but often you get to the point where you are in danger of breaking something if you press any harder. Then you realize that the best strategy is to let go—at least for a while.

I had an experience like that yesterday.

I have been wanting to interview my friend, Bob Goff, for some time. His new book, *Love Does*, was just published earlier this month, and is already in Amazon’s top 300 books.

I read the first draft of the manuscript more than a year ago and was blown away. Not only did I want to help my friend, I wanted to share this treasure of a book with my readers. I knew they would love getting to know Bob and his book.

So, Bob and I decided to do the interview via Skype last Saturday. I called him at the appointed time. However, he couldn’t get Skype to work correctly on his computer. I could hear him; I just couldn’t see him.

After twenty minutes of fiddling with it, we gave up and decided to reschedule.

We tried again yesterday. Everything seemed to work fine. I had a fantastic time talking to Bob and hearing more about his adventures with the book. But when we hung up, and I played the video, the audio was badly out of sync.

I worked on it for several hours, trying various solutions I found on Google. Nothing worked. The video looked like a bad foreign film where the actors lips and words wouldn’t align.

I grew increasingly frustrated. I kept thinking, *I just need to push a little harder.*

Then I remembered my dad’s words.

*“Son, don’t force it.”*

So, I relaxed, set it down, and decided to do something else. It’s just not worth breaking something. Instead, I had to believe that it was not meant to be. At least not for now.

In life, we have to learn there is a fine line between working hard and forcing an outcome that isn’t meant to be.

If we don’t push hard enough, we never experience the breakthroughs that take us to the next level. But if we push too hard, we risk breaking something important—our physical or emotional health or even a relationship. It’s just not worth it. We have to trust.

After all these years, this is a lesson I am still struggling to learn.

*Question:* Where are you frustrated right now? Is it time to push harder or relax and trust?

*Source: Michael Hyatt.com*



**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](http://stjohnthebaptizer.org)

**Pastor:** Fr. James Bankston  
[frjames@mac.com](mailto:frjames@mac.com)

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

*The Triumph and Exaltation of the Holy Cross*

So great and outstanding a possession is the cross that he who wins it has won a treasure. Rightly could I call this treasure the fairest of all fair things and the costliest, in fact as well as in name, for on it and through it and for its sake the riches of salvation that had been lost were restored to us.

Had there been no cross, Christ could not have been crucified. Had there been no cross, life itself could not have been nailed to the tree. And if life had not been nailed to it, there would be no streams of immortality pouring from Christ's side, blood and water for the world's cleansing. The legal bond of our sin would not be cancelled, we should not have attained our freedom, we should not have enjoyed the fruit of the tree of life and the gates of paradise would not stand open. Had there been no cross, death would not have been trodden underfoot, nor hell despoiled.

Therefore, the cross is something wonderfully great and honorable. It is great because through the cross the many noble acts of Christ found their consummation - very many indeed, for both His miracles and His sufferings were fully rewarded with victory. The cross is honorable because it is both the sign of God's suffering and the trophy of His victory. It stands for His suffering because on it He freely suffered unto death. But it is also His trophy because it was the means by which the devil was wounded and death conquered; the barred gates of hell were smashed, and the cross became the one common salvation of the whole world.

The cross is called Christ's glory; it is saluted as His triumph. We recognize it as the cup He longed to drink and the climax of the sufferings He endured for our sake.

*St. Andrew of Crete*