

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of Zachary and Elizabeth, Conception of St. John the Baptist -- September 23rd

September 23, 2012

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE CONCEPTION OF THE HONORABLE AND GLORIOUS PROPHET, FORERUNNER AND BAPTIZER JOHN

TONE 8

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 24 – SEPTEMBER 30

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25 – *OUR VENERABLE MOTHER EUPHROSYNE*

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

✙ Mary Hojsan; Req: Lorraine Smith

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30 – *EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; THE HOLY HIEROMARTYR GREGORY THE ILLUMINATOR, BISHOP OF GREATER ARMENIA*

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

For All Parishioners

Feast of Pokrova

On Sunday, September 30, we will have our traditional celebration of the feast of Покрова – The Holy Protection of the Mother of God. Tickets will be available in the church hall after Divine Liturgy.

Ticket prices:

Adults - \$15.00;

Youth (13-17) - \$10.00;

children 12 and under – Free.

Please Help! We need help to set up for the Praznyk Celebration in the Church Hall. Please come at 10:00 AM on Saturday, September 29. We also need help with serving and with clean up following the festivities.

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.

Eastern Catholic Churches Encounter 2012 “Together in Christ”

November 2-4, 2012
Hacienda Hotel (at LAX)
525 N. Sepulveda Blvd.
El Segundo, CA 90245

Encounter 2012 will be an exciting blend of speakers, religious services in the various Eastern Catholic traditions, vendor displays and hospitality time.

One Theme “Together in Christ”

Encounter 2012 will be a unique gathering of all Eastern Catholic Churches in the U.S.A. and Canada represented by hierarchy, clergy, religious and laity “Together in Christ.”

One Purpose “Together in the vineyard of Christ...”

The purpose is to explore the call to discipleship received at baptism “All you who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia!”

The spirituality of discipleship calls clergy and laity *together* into the vineyard of Christ with Unity of Mission; Diversity in Ministry.

Individual Registration costs \$75.00. If we have a group of 5 or more, the cost is discounted to \$50.00. We have the opportunity to register together with Holy Angels and receive the discount. If you can commit to go, please speak with Fr. James so that we can coordinate with Holy Angels.

Continued from *Issues for Catholic Voters: 2012 Edition*

III Our Public Witness

SHOULD A POLITICAL CANDIDATE TALK PUBLICLY about his faith? Should an elected official allow his or her faith to inform political decisions? These are questions that have been discussed for decades, but the debate has grown more heated in recent years

It's a crucial issue for Catholic voters: If Catholic politicians cannot be guided by faith in making laws and policies, then Catholic voters should not be guided by their deposit of faith, either.

The Church's position is clear: "A well-formed Christian conscience does not permit one to vote for a political program or an individual law which contradicts the fundamental contents of faith and morals" ("Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life").

This is precisely the principle invoked by those Catholics who objected to voting for health-care legislation containing federal funding for abortion. It's also the reason a number of Catholics in Congress promised to either repeal the legislation or strip out its abortion funding.

There can be no distinctive public witness if a Catholic politician fails to uphold the Church's teaching on abortion, marriage, fetal stem-cell research, or euthanasia.

Compartmentalizing

To those who say the Church should stay out of politics, the Church replies by teaching very clearly that the political order is not separate from the divine order revealed by faith (*Gaudium et Spes*, 74).

Some well-known Catholic politicians over the past decades have argued that Catholic values should remain personal, not political. They have created a dichotomy of the human person where none actually exists.

Moreover, these same politicians often claim a Catholic basis for policies addressing, for example, a preferential option for the poor, while wholeheartedly

rejecting Catholic teaching on the protection of life. If faith cannot enter politics, then it has no place in either the social justice or the pro-life debate—but, of course, it belongs in both.

This insistence on keeping faith out of politics restricts compassion to ourselves and our families. But a religion with "love thy neighbor" as its central tenet cannot be so artificially limited. Catholic values should be allowed to inform the rule of law, if that is the outcome of the political process.

None of the Founding Fathers believed that religion should be excluded from the political arena or be considered off-limits in Congress and the courts. Their only qualification was that the federal government should not establish an official religion for the State.

If the public witness of Christian politicians had been eliminated in the 19th century, the U.S. Supreme Court decision recognizing the legality of slavery would have never been overturned in law. The voters who supported Abraham Lincoln didn't worry about "imposing" their faith in ending the scourge of slavery; they didn't worry about keeping their religious convictions private.

Principle of Subsidiarity

History demonstrates that it is voters who change laws. Catholics recognize the grass-roots nature of political change—it's called the principle of subsidiarity. This principle states that social problems are most effectively addressed starting at the local level. If they remain unsolved, then it becomes the responsibility of larger institutions, such as the state and federal government, to act.

Pope Pius XI inaugurated the term in 1931 and construed its meaning in the political realm by calling it "an injustice, a grave evil and a disturbance of right order" for any higher association to usurp what a smaller one could more effectively address (*Quadragesimo Anno*, 79). Fundamentally, the

principle of subsidiarity represents a confidence and optimism about the desire and ability of human persons to respond to human need.

Through its insistence on subsidiarity, the faith of the Church upholds the fundamental freedom and human rights of the person against the power of the State.

Religious Liberty

There are many facets of the Catholic Faith that the faithful do not seek to express through law or public policy: the need to attend Mass regularly, to pray, to give alms, to seek the kingdom of heaven. The Constitution wisely forbids the establishment of a State religion in order to preserve the religious liberty of all citizens. We are not required by civil law to be religious.

Some specific parts of Catholic teaching do not reach into the public square, but that which serves the common good, human rights, and human dignity cannot be ignored. Why? Because these core concepts define basic truths of the human person and society. Catholic bishops have condemned again and again the growing tendency of Catholic politicians to ignore these teachings and allow the public square to be dominated by a secular perspective, one devoid of fundamental respect for all human persons, including the unborn, the suffering, and the terminally ill.

Once again, it belongs to the public witness of Catholics at all levels of politics to ground their decisions in what they know to be true about human life and society. There are times a Catholic politician causes scandal by supporting a policy that directly contradicts the Church's witness to human dignity.

IV On 'Faithful Citizenship'

The Catholic bishops added a new introductory note to their 2007 letter "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility" for the 2012 election. This note is intended as a guide to reading the document, as well as a warning against any misreading that would allow for "conscientious objections" on the issue of abortion, a tactic frequently employed by pro-

For example, some bishops have publicly criticized politicians within their dioceses who claim the label "Catholic" while supporting abortion or same-sex marriage. If Catholic voters took the action necessary to remove these politicians from office, then the bishops would be saved the trouble of denying them Communion. No doubt Catholic politicians would rethink their positions if they felt their offices were in jeopardy for ignoring the basic tenets of their Faith.

Some argue that this is a case of the Church insisting on its authority over the secular realm. This is not the case at all: The Church recognizes the legitimate distinction between Church and State. The issue is what happens to human beings when the perspective of faith is eliminated from governance and politics. The result is a practical atheism in the policy-making arena, coupled with a secular and materialistic view of the human person. Such a perspective leads to abortion as a method of population control, euthanasia as a means of ending suffering, and same-sex marriage as a form of civil rights.

Summary

- ✓ The Christian Faith cannot be restricted to oneself and one's family, making it impossible to "love one's neighbor."
- ✓ The principle of subsidiarity teaches that Catholics should first address social problems at the local level before looking to the government to intervene.
- ✓ Politics and government need the public witness of what the Faith teaches about the common good, human rights, and human dignity.

abortion Catholic politicians. In the new introduction, the bishops comment on how "Faithful Citizenship" has been misread:

Although it has at times been *misused to present an incomplete or distorted view of the demands of faith in politics*, this statement remains a faithful and challenging call to discipleship in the world of politics. It does not offer a voter's

guide, scorecard of issues, or direction on how to vote. It applies Catholic moral principles to a range of important issues and warns *against misguided appeals to “conscience” to ignore fundamental moral claims*, to reduce Catholic moral concerns to one or two matters, or to justify choices simply to advance partisan, ideological, or personal interests. (emphasis added)

Note the issue of conscience is tied specifically to those who would limit their political concerns to “one or two matters.” Of course, charges of a privatized conscience have never been laid at the feet of pro-life, pro-marriage voters. We can only infer, therefore, that this comment is aimed at those Catholics whose “social justice” orientation narrows their focus to issues of poverty and war, thus ignoring the settled issues of life, marriage, religious liberty, and euthanasia.

The note goes on to make the bishops’ case more pointedly:

It [“Faithful Citizenship”] *does not offer a quantitative listing of issues for equal consideration*, but outlines and makes important distinctions among moral issues acknowledging that some involve the clear obligation to oppose intrinsic evils which can never be justified and that others require action to pursue justice and promote the common good. (emphasis added)

For too many decades, pro-abortion Catholic politicians and their supporters have approached the issues of our social teaching as if they had equal value. Thus, when issue questionnaires are published and scored, a politician might lose only one point for supporting abortion but gain it back if, say, he or she supports net neutrality.

The bishops pull no punches when it comes to our “clear obligation to oppose intrinsic evils which can never be justified,” while noting that other issues “require action to pursue justice and promote the common good.” That some evils are intrinsic in nature, and not a matter of prudential judgment, is the reason that all these issues cannot be assigned

the same quantitative value: There are, as the bishops point out, qualitative differences.

When it comes to underscoring the specific “current and fundamental problems” among “pressing national issues,” the note begins above all with the “continuing destruction of unborn children through abortion and other threats to the lives and dignity of others who are vulnerable, sick, or unwanted,” followed by the attempt of government to force those in “health care, education, and social services...to violate their consciences or stop serving those in need.”

The other two specific concerns mentioned by the bishops are the “efforts to redefine marriage” and the “economic crisis which has devastated lives and livelihoods, increasing national and global unemployment, poverty, and hunger.”

The executive committee of the USCCB has done all Catholics a great service by providing a guide to using their “Faithful Citizenship” document. This guidance provides just what was needed so that, as the bishops urge us, “we can act together to promote and protect human life and dignity, marriage and family, justice and peace in service to the common good.”

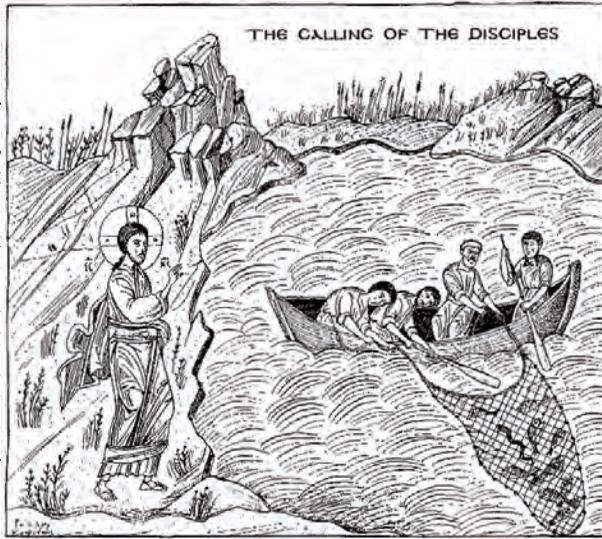
Summary

- ✓ Many bishops, especially the members of the USCCB Executive Committee who signed the new introduction, are aware of the confusion and consternation created during the 2008 campaign caused by the abuse of “Faithful Citizenship.”
- ✓ In spite of the new “Introductory Note,” the bishops’ document will be cherry-picked and repackaged into sound bites to justify voting for candidates who support abortion and same-sex marriage.
- ✓ The “Introductory Note” speaks truthfully when it comes to our “clear obligation to oppose intrinsic evils which can never be justified,” while noting that other issues “require action to pursue justice and promote the common good.”

EMBRACING DISCIPLESHIP: PRINCIPLES OF EVANGELIZATION

Before undertaking a parish evangelization effort, there are three clear prerequisites.

1. **Know God.** Our first task in proclaiming and sharing the Gospel is entering into and living in the reality of God -that is, existing in personal communion with Him. The goal of evangelization is “growth in the life and faith and spiritual understanding” and, ultimately, life in the eternal Kingdom of God. Such growth finds its beginning in our knowledge of God and our conviction that Jesus Christ is not only “the Son of the Living God, Who came into the world to save sinners,” but the very center of our lives. “Let your life testify to the presence of God within you,” wrote Saint Gregory of Nyssa. Evangelizing, in a nutshell, cannot take place if the evangelizers have not been evangelized, if they are not fully immersed in and committed to living an Orthodox Christian lifestyle in the Holy Spirit that, ultimately leads to the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ.



2. **Build community.** Our second priority is to acquire a spiritually-based communal attitude, to manifest a spiritual quality of life, rooted in and revolving around the person of Jesus Christ, within the entire community. Where there is hatred, bitterness, resentment and hostility, the community of love is destroyed; and without love the spiritual character of the Church is destroyed. Evangelization efforts will be useless without a receptive and caring parish.

3. **Proclaim and serve.** Our third prerequisite is to go out into the world proclaiming the message of God by serving human beings in distress and

providing for their essential needs in this world. The light of God must be allowed to shine through us and God’s goodness must be made to season our life by our active ministry to others. We must proclaim faith through actions that shine in the surrounding world.

Discipleship. Ultimately, evangelization, while rooted in these fundamental principles, will not take place without the serious commitment on the part of God’s People to accept the call to discipleship, to learning and sharing all that has been revealed by Jesus Christ and entrusted to us in the Tradition that we have received.

In Matthew 16:13-16, we read, “Jesus asked His disciples, ‘Who do men say that the Son of man is?’ And they said, ‘Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Simon Peter replied, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!’”

Peter’s answer must be our answer if we are to share the Gospel, which is rooted in nothing other than the person of Jesus Christ.

Before we can share the Good News with others, then, we must know and love God, enter into communion with Him through Jesus Christ, and allow ourselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit. Knowing and accepting Jesus as “the Christ, the Son of the Living God” - in a word, disciple-ship - is the very foundation of evangelization. Discipleship presumes action: in short, we cannot proclaim the Gospel to others if we have not fully embraced it in our own lives.



The oldest prayer we know dedicated to the Virgin Mary is known as “Beneath Your Compassion.” The earliest text of this hymn was found in a Coptic Vespers for Christmas of the 3rd century. It is written in Greek and dates to approximately 250 AD. It is used in the Coptic Liturgy to this day, as well as in the Orthodox Compline service, it being the last hymn to be sung.

*Beneath your compassion,
We take refuge, Virgin Mother of God.
Despise not our prayers in our necessity
But deliver us from harm
O only pure, only blessed one.*

The ancient date of the hymn tells us that the early Christians had an established devotion to the Theotokos and called upon her intercession. Long before the usage of the term “Theotokos” in the 5th century, the Church already knew the Virgin Mary as “Mother of God”.

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.

Sunday offering for September 16

Amount	Number
\$1.00	1 (loose)
\$10.00	2
\$15.00	1
\$20.00	1
\$35.00	1
\$40.00	3
\$50.00	2
\$60.00	1
\$100.00	1
\$200.00	1
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\$671.00	14 Parishioners

Parishioner Total: \$671.00

Average / parish household (39): \$17.21

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00

Shortfall: (\$1454.00)

Priest Warranty

MANUFACTURER'S NOTICE:

It has come to our attention that the pastor you received was shipped with a slight defect: he is not psychic. This defect necessitates certain special procedures to ensure optimum performance of your unit.

- It is necessary to inform him of any members who are hospitalized.
- It is necessary to inform him of any members who should be added to the "shut-in" list.
- If someone you know is sick or otherwise in need of the pastor's prayers, or if you know of someone who should be included in the prayers on Sunday morning, the pastor must be told, or he won't know.
- If you are in need of a pastoral visit or some other service from the pastor, you will get best results if you ask him.

We regret any inconvenience this may cause. If these special procedures create an undue burden, please feel free to send the unit back, and one with full psychic abilities will be shipped as soon as one becomes available.



**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
frjames@mac.com

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

Three Persons, One Flesh

Marriage is the representation of an important reality. It is a representation of Jesus Christ and the Church. It is a mystery, and the mystery consists in this, the fact that the spouses are united and the two become one. In great silence, while all around them there is complete tranquility, the two are united and together form the image of God. One meets the other to make one body.

Every father is happy at the marriage of a daughter or a son, because he sees that two persons are about to form a single body. He has spent a lot of money on his children, they have cost him a great deal, and to see them not marrying does not help to support him: one body divided into two, that is what they are.

But, when they marry how do they become one flesh? It is as if you were to take gold purer

than any that exists and mix it with more gold. The wife receives the seed – fused as though in a crucible of pleasure – nourishes it, protects it, and adding her own contribution delivers it to her husband as a baby, a third person to make a bridge between the two parents. The three are one flesh, counting the baby who binds the father and mother together.

But then, if they do not have children, will they in that case not be forming one flesh? They will be one flesh just the same, because it is the conjugal union that creates this unity by mingling together the bodies of the two spouses. Add a little seasoning to the oil and the mixture is complete. The same thing happens in marriage.

St. John Chrysostom