

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of Saint Cecilia and Others-- November 22nd



November 22, 2015

26TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – *TONE 1*

POSTFEAST OF ENTRANCE INTO THE TEMPLE

THE HOLY APOSTLE PHILEMON AND HIS COMPANIONS

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 23 – NOVEMBER 29

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28

NOTE: NO VESPERS THIS EVENING

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29 – 27TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; THE HOLY MARTYR PARAMON; THE HOLY MARTYR PHILOMENUS AND HIS COMPANIONS; OUR VENERABLE FATHER ACACIUS, WHO IS MENTIONED IN “THE LADDER”

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

For All Parishioners

*If you are reading the bulletin during the Liturgy (including the homily), please **stop** and be attentive – будьмо уважні!*

Mark Your Calendars



On December 13 St. Nicholas will visit our parish. Please come and greet him and enjoy the Christmas bake sale and bazaar.



Varenky for sale!

Thank you, thank you, thank you! to the ladies and gentleman who made 68 dozen varenky for the Christmas bake sale and bazaar. *Many hands make light work!* Place your order with Olena Bankston. Other food items such as holubtsi, kolach, kutia can be made to order. Speak with Olena Bankston.

Last Sunday’s Bulletin

If you haven’t yet picked up last Sunday’s bulletin, it is available in the church hall, or on our website, stjohnthebaptizer.org.

Let the mouth also fast from disgraceful speeches and railing. For what does it profit if we abstain from birds and fishes; and yet bite and devour our brethren? The evil speaker eats the flesh of his brother, and bites the body of his neighbor.

– St. John Chrysostom, on fasting

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Fr. Frank Avant will be celebrating the Divine Liturgy next Sunday. Please welcome him during his Thanksgiving Holiday visit.

Cards for sale

Various Greeting Cards are available for sale in the church hall following each Divine Liturgy. See Mary Kitt to purchase.

5 Scandalous Defects of Jesus that Make His Love the Most Perfect of All

Garrett Johnson

<http://catholic-link.org/gallery-the-5-defects-of-jesus/>

Saint John Paul II once said: “It is along the paths of daily life that you can meet the Lord! [...] In this concrete and surprising encounter, described in a few, essential words, we find the origin of every journey in faith. It is Jesus who takes the initiative. When we have to do with Him, the question is always turned upside down: from questioners, we become questioned; «searchers», we discover that we are «sought»; He, indeed, has always loved us first (cf. 1Jn 4:10). This is the fundamental dimension of the encounter: we are not dealing with something, but with Someone, with the «Living One».

Indeed, we seek for the Lord, but more times than not, **the Lord is not where we expect**. Time and time again, it is where we least expect him. Time and time again it is in the darkness that we glimpse his light. Time and time again, it is before the cross that we must kneel in order to witness his kingdom. This, I believe, was a lesson well understood by **Cardinal Francisco Xavier Nguyen van Thuan** (a vietnamese bishop that was incarcerated for 13 years under the communist regime). Jesus came to his encounter in captivity, amongst the shadows. In prison, Francisco suffered a daily existence of solitude; but it was there that he discovers the presence of “Another” as never before.

“All prisoners, myself included, constantly wait to be let go. I decided then and there that my captivity would not be merely a time of resignation but a turning point in my life. I decided I would not wait. I would live the present moment and fill it with love.” – Cardinal Nguyen

Fruit of this profound encounter, Cardinal van Thuan wrote various books. One of them is called “Testimony of Hope” where we find the spiritual exercises that the Cardinal presented to Saint John Paul II in 2000. We hope that the following will serve as an excellent resource for your apostolate!

First Defect: Jesus does not have a good memory

During his agony on the cross, Jesus heard the voice of the thief at his right side: Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom. If it had been me, I would have answered him: “I won’t forget you, but you must pay for your crimes by spending some 20 years in purgatory”. On the contrary, said: Today you will be with me in Paradise. Jesus just forgot all about his sins. As for Mary Magdalene, Jesus never questioned her about her scandalous past life. He simply said to her: Your sins have been forgiven you because you loved so much. When the father sees his prodigal son coming home, he runs to meet him, embraces him and does not even give him time to pronounce the little speech he had prepared. He calls his servants and says: Kill the fatted calf to feast my son. My dead son has returned to life...

Jesus doesn’t have a memory like mine. Not only does he forgive, he forgets everything.

Second Defect: Jesus is not good in mathematics

If Jesus took a math examination, he would surely fail it. A shepherd had one hundred sheep; one of them strayed. Without thinking, the shepherd went in search of it, leaving the other ninety-nine sheep. When he found the lost sheep, he put it on his shoulders. **For Jesus, 1 equals 99**, perhaps even more! Who can accept this? When it comes to saving a lost sheep, nothing can stop Jesus: risk, fatigue, danger ... Think also of Jesus’ merciful gestures when he sits at Jacob’s well in order to seek out the Samaritan woman or when Jesus invited himself to Zacchaeus’ house! What simplicity; what love for sinners.

Third Defect: Jesus does not know anything about logic

One night, a woman who had ten drachmas lost one of them. So she lit a lamp to search for it. When she found it, she invited her neighbors in and told them: Rejoice with me, because I found the drachma which I had lost. It is truly illogical

to spend the night searching for one drachma and then to have a feast in the middle of the night to celebrate having found it. What is more, in inviting her friends to celebrate with her, she spent more than a drachma. Even ten drachmae would not cover the cost of the feast. Here we can truly say with Pascal: **The heart has its reasons which reason does not know.** It would have been more logical for the woman to go to bed and to search for the drachma in the daylight. But for Jesus, the search for a lost one has priority. He cannot lose a minute. Jesus revealed the secret of his heart. There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

Fourth Defect: Jesus is an adventurer

A person in charge of publicity for a company or a politician seeking election prepares a very precise program with many promises. **Jesus promises only trials and persecutions to those who follow him.** He warns them that the Son has nowhere to lay his head (Matthew 8:20). In sending his disciples out on a mission, he tells them to take nothing for the journey: no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money and not to have two tunics (Luke 9:13). He also tells them that they will be blessed when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven... (Matthew 5:11-12).

In this state of absolute poverty, where did Jesus send his disciples? How far were they to go? They were to bring salvation, even to the very end of the earth (Acts 13:47). Have you ever heard of such an adventurer and his word: I am with you every day, even to the end of the world. We are truly disciples of Jesus when we follow him even to the end of the world. We are members of his association of adventurers, without address, without a telephone number, without a fax or website.

Fifth Defect: Jesus knows nothing about finances and economy

The kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard... After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard... About the eleventh hour, he went out and found

others standing and he said to them 'why do you stand here idle?' They said to him 'Because no one has hired us'. He said to them 'You go into the vineyard too.' And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.' And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. And on receiving it they grumbled at the householder... But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius?' (Matthew 20:1-13).

If Jesus were named steward of a community or manager of an enterprise, those institutions would go bankrupt, because he would pay the same salary to the one who started working in the morning and to the one who began in the afternoon! Would he have made a mistake? Did he calculate incorrectly? No, he would do it on purpose: Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last as I give to you.. do you begrudge my generosity? (Matthew 20:14-15).

... We have believed in love.

You wonder why Jesus has these defects? Because He is love (1 John 4:16). Authentic love does not reason, does not calculate, does not measure, does not put up barriers, does not lay down conditions, does not set up boundaries and does not remember offenses committed... **Jesus always acts out of love.** From the home of the Trinity he brought us a great love, infinite, divine, a love that reaches—as the Fathers of the Church used to say—even to the point of folly, throwing our human measurements into crisis.

With today's post, I invite you ask yourself: How often do I wait for the sufferings to cede before I begin to truly hope? How often do I wait for the hate to wane before I begin to truly love? How often do I wait for the darkness to dissipate before I begin to truly shine? In all of this... what I have understood my Christian life to be? I am a Christian? If Jesus promises only trials and persecutions to those who follow him, why do we begin to doubt when they appear in our lives?

12 Things the Normal Orthodox Christian is Doing

by Fr. Andrew Stephen, blogs.ancientfaith.com October 7

The normal Orthodox Christian—who is living according to the norms of the Orthodox faith—will be doing the following (this is not an exhaustive list, nor is this in order of priority):

1. Participating in church services as often as possible.

Attendance at every Sunday morning liturgy is a minimal baseline for worship life—in most cases, it is not enough. And participation doesn't just mean attendance, but engagement, whether silently and attentively, singing along, making the Sign of the Cross, etc.

2. Prayer at home every day.

Ideally, at least morning and evening prayer, as well as prayer over meals. It is especially important for husbands and wives to pray together regularly and for parents to pray with their children.

3. Receiving the sacraments.

This isn't just communion and confession, but also holy unction (when sick), marriage (in the Church, not outside!), baptism and chrismation (for you and your children), and even considering whether you or one of the men of your family should think about ordination.

4. Avoiding immorality.

What we do with our bodies, minds and words has an effect on our salvation. Use them for good, not for evil. Seek to serve rather than to be served.

5. Fasting according to Church tradition.

Your father-confessor will help to apply the fasting traditions of the Church for you and your family. We fast on most Wednesdays and Fridays, as well as during the four major fasting seasons (Great Lent, the Apostles Fast, the Dormition Fast and the Nativity Fast).

6. Confession.

The sacrament of confession is critical to our repentance. We should go at least once during each of the four fasting seasons but also whenever there is a need, especially a sin that disrupts your peace.

7. Getting spiritual advice.

This often happens in confession, but your father-confessor is there for you at other times, too. He's a resource you should utilize frequently.

8. Tithing.

Giving 10% of your income back to God (it is His gift to you!) is a Biblical standard that Orthodox Christians should embrace. If you're not ready for 10% yet, choose another percentage and be disciplined about it, working toward 10%. If you're able to give more than 10%, do so. Don't "give until it hurts"—give until it feels good! Giving our money to God in worship (not because we need to meet a budget) is one part of what it means to give Him everything about ourselves so that it can be healed. (Is

tithing Orthodox? Yes! It's mentioned in the Fathers many times, but here's the kicker—the Fathers usually say that Christians should exceed the tithe expected by the Old Covenant.)

9. Almsgiving.

This is directly aiding someone in need. It might be monetary, but it also might be with your labor, your encouragement or even just your attitude.

10. Education.

We seek a deeper understanding of our faith not only so that we can know what our piety

means but so that we give even our minds to God for His healing and transformation. Our whole intellect should be engaged in Christ—whether through spiritual reading, classes or some other form of education.

11. Sharing the faith.

If you're grateful for the salvation God has given you, you will want to share it with others.

12. Going on pilgrimage.

It's a journey with a holy purpose. Common destinations include monasteries and important shrines.



**THE CITY A DESERT:
THE DEVIL DOES NOT PARTICULARLY CARE
WHETHER WE...**

The devil does not particularly care whether we are moral or immoral. What concerns him very much is only whether we are close to God. The devil casts us into immorality because it darkens our mind's eye ["nous"] and thus takes us far from God. However, he is careful because sin can push us to repentance, and then he would lose us. Even virtue is a useful tool to him, and he has often used it to draw many people away from God. His most secure prisoners, after all, are those who are morally irreproachable but also have a grand idea of themselves. And unfortunately there are many of them."

"We do not have the right to hide the truth just because we are too weak to put it into practice. We are obliged to confess the truth and at the same time admit that we do not do what our Lord has commanded."

~Alexander Kalomiros:

A nation always gets the kind of politicians it deserves. If a time ever comes when the religious Jews, Protestants and Catholics ever have to suffer under a totalitarian state, which would deny them the right to worship God according to the light of their conscience, it will be because for years they thought it made no difference what kind of people represented them in Congress, and because they abandoned the spiritual in the realm of the temporal

~ Servant of God, Fulton J. Sheen

Sunday offering for November 8

| Amount | Number |
|-----------|-----------|
| \$15.00 | 3 |
| \$20.00 | 3 |
| \$25.00 | 1 |
| \$40.00 | 2 |
| \$50.00 | 3 |
| \$16.00 | 1 (loose) |
| \$70.00 | 1 |
| \$85.00 | 2 |
| \$150.00 | 1 |
| \$100.00 | 1 |
| \$150.00 | 1 |
| \$200.00 | 1 |
| \$300.00 | 1 |
| <hr/> | |
| \$1201.00 | |

Parishioner Total: \$1181.00
 Visitor Total: \$20.00

Average / parish household (42): \$14.23
 Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2200.00

Deficit: (\$944.00)

Year-to-date deficit: (\$44,279.00)

Sunday offering for November 15

| Amount | Number |
|----------|--------|
| \$5.00 | 1 |
| \$10.00 | 1 |
| \$15.00 | 1 |
| \$20.00 | 3 |
| \$40.00 | 3 |
| \$50.00 | 2 |
| \$80.00 | 1 |
| \$85.00 | 1 |
| <hr/> | |
| \$475.00 | |

Parishioner Total: \$440.00
 Visitor Total: \$35.00

Average / parish household (42): \$5.30
 Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2200.00

Deficit: (\$1685.00)

Year-to-date deficit: (\$45,964.00)

Stewardship Prayer

Christ our True God, Lover of mankind, You call us to be Your disciples and good stewards of all Your many gifts.

Open our minds and hearts to a greater awareness and deeper appreciation of Your countless blessings.

Transform us through the power of the Most Holy Spirit to nurture a stewardship way of life marked by faith-filled prayer, service to our neighbor and generous sharing.

Teach us to be faithful servants of Your gifts. With Mary, your Mother's help, may we return ten-fold the gifts entrusted to us.

Bless our Parish with a deepening devotion to liturgy, a growing commitment for service, and increasing levels of generosity as we work to advance the mission of both our parish and eparchy.

For if not us, who? If not here, where?

If not now, when? If not for Your Kingdom, why?

O Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of the eternal Father, You have said that without You we can accomplish nothing. How true are Your words, O Lord. Thus we pray, good and loving Lord: if it be Your will, help us to complete this work. May it glorify You with Your Father who has no beginning and Your all-holy Spirit. Amen.

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**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква
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How Shall We Repay the Lord for All His Goodness to Us?

What words can adequately describe God's gifts? They are so numerous that they defy enumeration. They are so great that any one of them demands our total gratitude in response.

Yet even though we cannot speak of it worthily, there is one gift which no thoughtful person can pass over in silence. God fashioned mankind in His own image and likeness; He gave him knowledge of Himself; He endowed him with the ability to think which raised him above all living creatures; He permitted him to delight in the unimaginable beauties of paradise, and gave him dominion over everything upon earth.

Then, when man was deceived by the serpent and fell into sin, which led to death and to all the sufferings associated with death, God still did not forsake him.

No, we were not abandoned by the goodness of the Lord. Although we were dead, our Lord Jesus Christ restored us to life again, and in a way even

more amazing than the fact itself. ... He redeemed us from the curse by becoming a curse for our sake, and He submitted to the most ignominious death in order to exalt us to the life of glory. Nor was He content merely to summon us back from death to life; he also bestowed on us the dignity of His own divine nature and prepared for us a place of eternal rest where there will be joy so intense as to surpass all human imagination.

How, then, shall we repay the Lord for all his goodness to us? He is so good that He asks no recompense except our love: that is the only payment He desires. To confess my personal feelings, when I reflect on all these blessings I am overcome by a kind of dread and numbness at the very possibility of ceasing to love God and of bringing shame upon Christ because of my lack of recollection and my preoccupation with trivialities.

St. Basil the Great

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