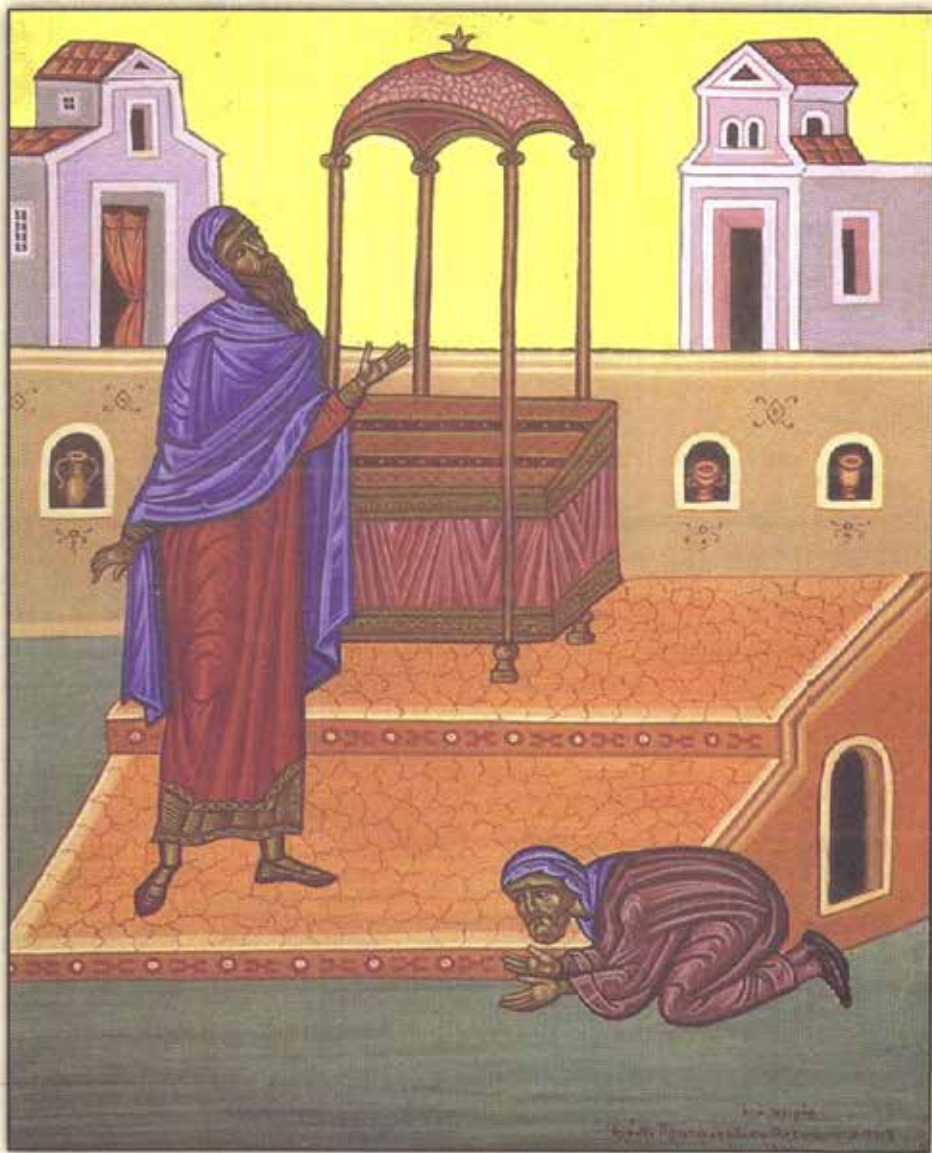


SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE



Icon of the Publican and Pharisee

February 9, 2014

SUNDAY OF PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE – TONE 5

LEAVETAKING OF THE ENCOUNTER OF OUR LORD, WITH THE RIGHTEOUS SIMEON AND ANNA
THE HOLY MARTYR NICEPHORUS OF ANTIOCH

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 10 – FEBRUARY 16

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15 – THE HOLY APOSTLE ONESIMUS, THE SLAVE OF PHILEMON

6:00 PM – Great Vespers

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16 – SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON. THE HOLY PRIEST-MARTYR PAMPHILUS AND THOSE
WITH HIM: DEACON VALENS, PAUL, SELEUCUS, PORPHYRIUS, JULIAN, THEODULUS, ELIJAH,
JEREMIAH, ISAIAH, SAMUEL AND DANIEL

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

for all parishioners

Prayer service - Postponed

Due to scheduling conflicts the ecumenical prayer service has been tentatively rescheduled for February 23rd at 1:00 PM.

Stewardship Sunday

At the beginning of the Divine Liturgy on February 23rd we will gather all the completed stewardship pledge forms and place them on the Holy Table, offering our Time, Talent and Treasure to our Lord, the source of all good things. Please prayerfully consider your stewardship as you fill out your pledge form.

TEACHING FROM THE SAINTS

Evil is bound to find a justification for itself, must appear disguised as good – often the highest good. Evil strives to present its positive aspect as a jewel so precious that all means are justified to attain it. Yet, good is not attained by evil means and the end does not justify the means. Good not obtained by good means is not good. This is the testament we have received from the Apostles and holy Fathers.

- Elder Sophrony
on the teaching of Saint Silouan

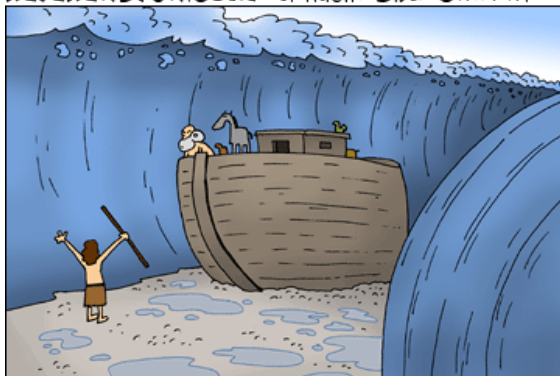
As the moon waxes and wanes, it illustrates the condition of man. Sometimes he does what is right, sometimes he sins, and then through repentance returns to a holy life. The intellect of one who sins is not destroyed, just as the physical size of the moon does not diminish, but only its light. Through repentance, a man regains his true splendor, just as the moon clothes itself once more in its full light after a period of waning.

- Saint John of Karpathos

A holy man named Pambo asked Anthony, “What ought I to do to live a righteous and spiritual life?” Anthony replied, “Do not trust in your own righteousness, do not worry about the past, but control your tongue and your stomach.”

- From the life of Saint Anthony the Great

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02-07-2014

MOSES AND NOAH HAVING AN ARGUMENT

Triodion - Sundays in Preparation for Great Lent

During the three week pre-Lenten season the church prepares us for repentance. She urges us to prepare ourselves through gradual diet modification and instructing us with themes of humility, judgment, repentance and forgiveness. The period is bounded by four Sundays.

1. February 9: Publican and the Pharisee (Luke 18:10-14)

This Sunday emphasizes humility as a key attitude for repentance. The Greek word for repentance is *metanoia*, which means a change of mind. To repent we must not boast of our spiritual feats, but humble ourselves like the Publican who longs for a change of mind. We are called to learn this secret of the inward poverty of the Publican rather than the self-righteousness of the Pharisee who is convinced of his perfectness and not open to change because of his pride. There is no prescribed fasting for this week.

2. February 16: Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)

This Sunday teaches us about our need to return from exile. This parable shows us the mercy of the Father who with open arms receives his son, whose behavior he does not return, but is joyous of his return home. We are encouraged to examine ourselves in the period of Lent to purge ourselves of sin and “come home.”

The week that follows is called Meatfare Week (*Kreatini*) as it is the last week we are to eat meat. In the villages of Greece this was the traditional week to slaughter the family pig and the leftovers were smoked to be eaten after Pascha. The normal rule of fasting are applied to this week, fast on Wednesday and Friday.

Saturday of this week is the first Saturday of Souls where those who have fallen asleep in the hope of resurrection and eternal life are remembered at a special service “Saturday of the Souls.” Parishioners bring small dishes of *kollyva* to the church and submit a list of first names of deceased ones to the priest. We commend to God all those who have departed before us, who are now awaiting the Last Judgment. This is an expression of the Churches love. We remember them because we love them.

3. February 23: Judgment (Meat-fare) Sunday (Matt 25:31-46)

This Sunday emphasizes the Last Judgment. We are reminded of our individual responsibility for love. We are encouraged not to eat meat this week, but we can eat eggs, cheese and other dairy products.

4. March 2: Forgiveness (Cheese-Fare) Sunday (Matt 6:14-21)

This Sunday emphasizes forgiveness and how we must forgive others if God is to forgive us so we can break the chains of sinful tendency which we inherit from the Adam and Eve. This is the last day of preparation as the traditional Lenten fast begins on the following day where no meat, dairy or eggs are to be eaten according to the church tradition.

5. March 3: Great Lent Begins

Great Lent is the period that the Church has in her wisdom set aside for us to intensify our own spiritual growth through fasting, prayer and worship. If you follow the Church guidelines on fasting, make time to attend the services and intensify your own prayer life, you will be rewarded with a greater closeness to God.

ASK FATHER: 4 QUESTIONS / 4 ANSWERS

adapted from orthodoxdelmarva.org

Question: If God is one, how can Christians have so many varying and even conflicting positions on theological, social, and moral issues?

Answer: Although the answer to this question is simple, it is not often easily accepted because it requires a little humility. God is truly one, but we are not yet fully one with Him. As St. Dorotheus of Gaza once said, we are as points along the perimeter of a circle and God is at the very center. As we draw closer to Him, we draw closer to one another, until finally we arrive at perfect union with Him and one another. The fact that we have conflicting positions on theological, social, and moral issues, should indicate to us that we need to draw closer to God, who alone can bring us closer together and make us one. This is the mission and activity of the Church, which has the Lord Jesus Christ as its center, focal point, and means of unity.

Question: I feel very strongly about my own beliefs, why should I believe as the Church believes?

Answer: Personal conviction is a key part of Christian development, however, just because we have strong feelings that we are correct does not make it so. I may feel very strongly that $2 + 2 = 4$ (which of course it does) but it is not my strength of conviction that makes me correct. The real proof is found in the discipline of mathematics, and the common witness of all those who have passed the 1st grade. :)

In the sciences and in the spiritual life, we should be very careful not to verify our thoughts and beliefs by our own *feelings*

and emotions. This is called “*emotional reasoning*”, an identified psychological pathology, and this can lead to spiritual delusion as well.

In the spiritual life, the safe way to truth, the sure way to acquire the seemingly intangible mind of the invisible Christ, is through the very tangible mind of the visible Church. It is only when we compare our personal understanding to the commonly held mind and consensus of the Church that we are able to discern whether what we believe is correct or not.

This is the very reason why St. Paul makes the connection between the mind of the Church and the mind of Christ; through the one we arrive at the other. This is because although distinct the two are actually intimately and perfectly connected. To show this unity, St. Paul speaks about Christ as the head and the faithful as the body. Just as a physical body has no mind without its head, so too the Church has no mind apart from Christ – the Church’s teachings are the Lord’s teachings.

It is through the unity of the Church that we can experience unity with God and with one another. But this unity only comes through the difficult road of repentance, which begins with the humility that perhaps we are not as connected to God as we might think or feel.

Question: So are you saying that the consensus of the Church cannot be wrong? I have a real problem with that.

Answer: In our fallenness, in our separation from God and one another, we all have become accustomed to going our own way,

doing our own thing, and not being held in check by anyone, even at times God Himself. Although this is an unhealthy form of individuality and freedom, we justify this stance by claiming that all is relative; after all, we say, even if absolute truth exists, there is no way to verify it.

In His foreknowledge, God knew that this would be our problem. And in His love for mankind, He not only revealed Himself as absolute Truth, in the person of Jesus Christ, but He also set up His Church as "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15) in which dwells the Holy Spirit, who will "guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). When we see the Church's divinely given claim to truth as tyranny, we tragically turn away from the leadership of God Himself. This ultimately will lead to separation from not only the Church but also separation from God – the one a visible sign of the other. Such division then becomes the greatest evidence of our self-direction. Unity, on the other hand, is the greatest proof of God's leadership. This we see in the Lord's Church, which Christ established "that all might be One".

Therefore, we should test our relationship with God by comparing it to the relationship the Church has with God. Submitting to such a test is not giving in to human tyranny but rather humble recognition of the sovereignty of God the Father, the Incarnation of God the Son, and the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit within the Church. The Church then is not the problem; it is God's answer to our problems.

Question: Doesn't the Church need to critically examine its core teachings in light of the changing world? Is the Church afraid of self-examination?

Answer: Historically speaking, remember what happened in Western Christianity when groups reevaluated and changed core teachings, forgetting their accountability to the consensus of the Church and Christ its head. This led to a multitude of schisms. Now, Western Christianity has some 30,000 divisions – all because of 1) not being afraid to change core teachings and 2) not being afraid to separate from the consensus.

In the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, the core teachings are the Lord's, who is "the same, yesterday, today and forever" (Hebrews: 13:8), and we guard these teachings through the consensus of the Church. It is incumbent upon everyone to examine the teaching of the Church not in order to redefine it according to one's own personal beliefs or the changing fads of the world; just the opposite. Examination of Church teaching is made to make sure that the current teaching corresponds perfectly to the unchanging consensus of the Apostles, bishops, priests and laity – a unity spanning across time and space, shared between the creation and the Creator. Therefore, the reason we don't change the teaching is because we don't want to break our union with God and one another, not because we are afraid of self-examination. Our understanding of self-examination is much more properly placed on the personal level where it belongs. We examine ourselves to see if we are conforming ourselves to Christ through His Church. We examine ourselves to see if we are overcoming divisions through repentance (changing our minds, hearts, and lives), or conversely if we are increasing divisions through our unwillingness to be changed and conformed to Christ, who alone is the focal point of all unity.

Both Lungs: You Say Potato

January 17, 2014

By Brent Kostyniuk

One of my son-in-laws is fond of saying, “You say pot-ay-to and I say pot-ah-to.” He usually makes the comment towards the end of a long conversation when we have been discussing cars or modern technology. We never really argue and our discussions never become heated. However, we come from different generations and tend to look at many things in different ways. Still, we understand each other and respect each other’s viewpoint. Essentially, his remark means we have agreed to disagree.

Mutual understanding is the key. I understand why he has the viewpoint he does, and I’m quite certain he understands why I think and feel the way I do. In the end, our mutual understanding leads to mutual respect.

So it is, or should be, within the Catholic Church. Last month, Both Lungs talked about the role the Eastern Catholic churches play within the universal Catholic Church and the validation they have received over the years. This began most notably when Pope Leo XIII issued the apostolic constitution *Orientalium Dignitas* 120 years ago. The essence of his message was that the Eastern Churches play a large and significant role in the Catholic Church. It is a role which is out of proportion to their very small size in comparison with the Latin Church. The Eastern Churches have a dignity and heritage which needs to be preserved. Indeed, more than preserved, it needs to be nurtured and recovered, where tradition has been lost.

An even stronger message was delivered by Blessed John Paul II in the Apostolic Letter *Oriente Lumen* when he wrote, “...the first need for Catholics is to be familiar with that tradition, so as to be nourished by it and to encourage the process of unity in the best way possible for each.” Familiarity, understanding, respect. It’s like my son-in-law and me.

So, if the West says pot-ah-to and the East says pot-ay-to, how do they come to understand each other?

A good start is by realizing we are all part of the, as we profess in the Nicene Creed, “...one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church.” Next, we need to realize we share the same basic faith. True, there are certain

tenets which are different, but at its heart, our faith is the same. Call it what you will, we are both looking at the same potato. However, even if it is the same potato, we need to realize we have different ways of looking at it. Like my son-in-law and me, the Eastern Churches and the Latin Church, grew up in different places, both in terms of time and place.

Sometimes the difference in approach between East and West harkens back to a historical incident. The matter of making the sign of the cross from right to left or left to right is an example. In other cases, what separates East and West may reflect a difference in theology. A good example of this is the prayer to the Mother of God. The Byzantine version, while similar to the Hail Mary familiar to Catholics in the West, takes a slight different approach to.

Rejoice, Virgin Mary, full of grace,
O Theotokos, the Lord is with you.
Blessed are you among women
And blessed is the fruit of your womb,
For you have given birth
To the Saviour of our souls.

While a good deal of time could be spent examining the differences, I would just like to point out three. The first is the use of the Eastern title “Theotokos.” Literally translated as God bearer or Birth giver to God, the title Theotokos was agreed at the Third Ecumenical Council held at Ephesus in 431. Theologically, Theotokos emphasizes the fact that Mary’s Son, Jesus, is fully God, as well as fully human, united in a single Person. Next, this prayer refers to Mary’s Son as the Saviour, rather than simply Jesus. Finally, it is totally a prayer of praise, with no supplication added at the end. Personally, I prefer the Eastern version, particularly when it is sung, but it certainly is not a matter of right and wrong, just a difference of viewpoint. No matter whether we look from the East or from the West, we are all looking at the central figure of Christ.

Finally, in case you were wondering, the pot-ay-to pot-ah-to saying comes from the song *Let’s Call the Whole Thing Off* originally sung by Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in the 1937 movie *Shall We Dance*.

WHAT IS A FIRST-PORCION GIVER?

A First-Portion Giver is a believer who offers a first-portion of his time, talent, and financial resources out of grateful recognition of the fact that all he has, he holds in trust from God.



TIME

A First Portion Giver offers a first portion of his *time*.

“Let us spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing. But let us encourage one another...”

Hebrews 10:24-25



TALENT

A First Portion Giver offers a first portion of his *talent*.

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.”

1 Corinthians 12:4-6



RESOURCES

A First Portion Giver offers a first portion of his *treasure*.

“Concerning the collection for the saints..., on the first day of the week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in proportion to the income God has given you...”

1 Corinthians 16:2

Sunday offering for January 26

Amount	Number
\$10.00	1
\$15.00	2
\$20.00	5
\$30.00	2
\$40.00	4
\$50.00	2
\$75.00	1
\$100.00	2
\$135.00	1
\$300.00	1
\$400.00	1
<hr/>	
\$1565.00	

Parishioner Total: \$1390.00

Visitor Total: \$175.00

Average / parish household (42): \$33.90

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00

Deficit: **(\$735.00)**

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.

Pastor:

Fr. James Bankston: (619) 905-5278

Pastoral Council:

Frank Avant: (760) 805-1667

Vladimir Bachynsky:

(619) 865-1279

Mark Hartman: (619) 446-6357

Luke Miller: (858) 354-2008

Jeanine Soucie: (718) 674-4529

Social Committee Chairpersons:

Olga & Michael Miller:

(858) 483-3294

Finance Committee:

Bohdan Knianicky: (619) 303-9698

Frank Avant: (760) 805-1667



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

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Parish Office: (619) 697-5085

Website: stjohnthebaptizer.org

Pastor: Fr. James Bankston
frjames@mac.com

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

Humility is the Mark of a Sinner

In the case of that Pharisee who was praying, the things he said were true. Since he was saying them out of pride and the tax collector was telling his sins with humility, the confession of sins of the last was more pleasing to God than the acknowledgment of the almsgiving of the first. It is more difficult to confess one's sins than one's righteousness. God looks on the one who carries a heavy burden. The tax collector therefore appeared to Him to have had more to bear than the Pharisee had. He went down more justified than the Pharisee did, only because of the fact he was humble. If this Pharisee had been sinful, his prayer would have added iniquity to iniquity, but the Lord purified the tax collector of his iniquity. If just by praying, the Pharisee's prayer provoked God's wrath, then as a result of that provocation, the prayer of the tax collector proved all the more potent.

St. Ephrem the Syrian

The stern Pharisee, who in his self pride not

only boasted of himself but also discredited the tax collector in the presence of God, made his justice void by being guilty of pride. Instead of the Pharisee, the tax collector went down justified, because he had given glory to God, the Holy One. He did not dare lift his eyes but sought only to plead for mercy. He accused himself by his posture, by striking his breast, and by entertaining no other motive except propitiation. Be on your guard, therefore, and bear in mind this example of severe loss sustained through arrogance. The one guilty of insolent behavior suffered the loss of his justice and forfeited his reward by his bold self-reliance. He was judged inferior to a humble man and a sinner because in his self-exaltation he did not await the judgment of God but pronounced it himself. Never place yourself above anyone, not even great sinners. Humility often saves a sinner who has committed many terrible transgressions.

St. Basil the Great