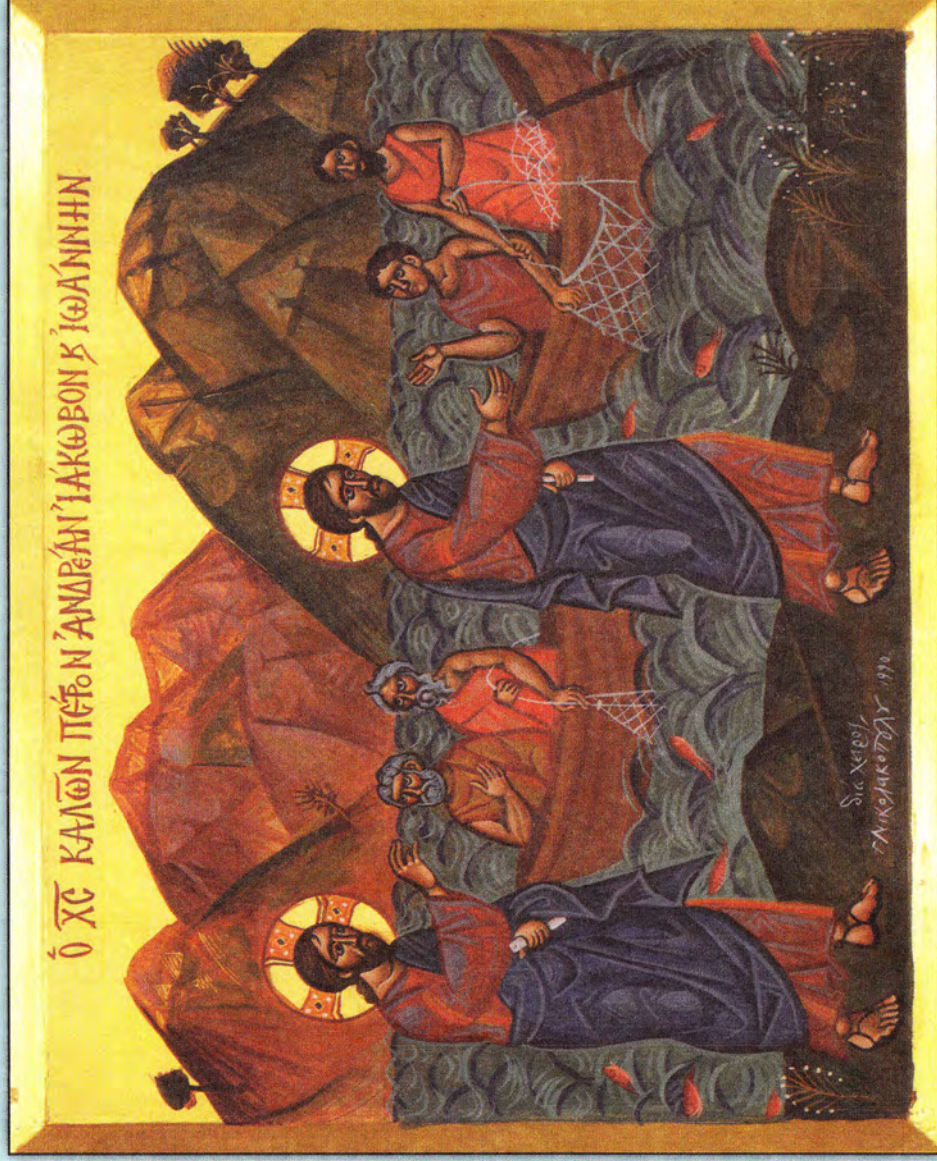


SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



*Icon of the Call of the Apostles*



**May 29, 2016**

**2ND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

**THE VENERABLE MARTYR AND VIRGIN THEODOSIA**

**SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF MAY 30 – JUNE 5**

SATURDAY, JUNE 4 – OUR HOLY FATHER NICETAS, BISHOP OF CHALCEDON

**Note: NO vespers this evening**

SUNDAY, JUNE 5 – 3RD SUNDAY AFTER ALL PENTECOST; THE HOLY HIEROMARTYR DOROTHEUS, BISHOP OF TYRE;  
VENERATION OF THE ICON OF THE MOTHER OF GOD, "OF IHOR," SO CALLED BECAUSE IT BELONGED  
TO IHOR OLHOVYCH, PRINCE OF KIEV (+1147)

8:45 AM – Divine Praises

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

For All Parishioners

**PARISH MEETING**

A date of June 26 has been set for a general meeting of the parish. This meeting will frun from 12:00 noon until 1:30 PM.

Please plan to attend this important meeting.

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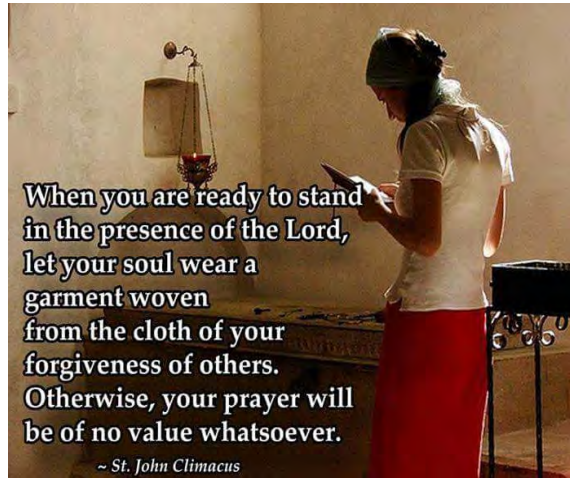
**Parish Rummage Sale**

There will be a rummage sale on Saturday, June 18 to benefit the parish. We are already accepting donations. Volunteers are needed. Please contact Olena Bankston at (619) 567-6967.

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**Fr. James will be away...**

Fr. James will be out of town through 6/2/2016. In case of an emergency please contact either Fr. Brian Escobedo of Holy Angels Byzantine Catholic Church at (858) 277-2511 or (661) 800-8383, Fr. James Babcock at (714) 600-3660, or or Fr. Ihor Koshyk at (323) 663-6307.



**When you are ready to stand  
in the presence of the Lord,  
let your soul wear a  
garment woven  
from the cloth of your  
forgiveness of others.  
Otherwise, your prayer will  
be of no value whatsoever.**

~ St. John Climacus



**Scurryfunge:**

(SKUR-ee-funge),

**verb:**

To rush around cleaning when company is on their way over.

**USED IN A SENTENCE:**

"If it weren't for the occasional scurryfunge, my house would never get cleaned."

## NOTES ON THE JESUS PRAYER

We very much pity those Orthodox Christians who think that the best rest for their exhausted soul is to watch television news. This isn't a bad thing, perhaps, but it's a dead thing. You may spend all of the earthly time you have been allotted with such distractions, but you will never be at peace. If you want to calm your mind and ease your heart, try calling instead on the most holy name of Jesus Christ, without haste and with only one intent: to attract His attention and repent of your sins.

To stand before the face of God, to cleanse your heart and sanctify the space of your life by invoking His name, this is your aim. We don't know how God cleanses our heart by His name, but we believe that He does so in a supernatural way. In saying the Jesus Prayer, it is not so important whether you are "a monk or a drunk," but you are to be very steadfast, attentive, humble, mild, and concentrated.

Try taking a walk for ten minutes as you invoke His miracle-working name, and you will see spiritual profit. Begin in a simple, humble manner, "Oh, Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me a sinner." You may even do this somewhat mechanically, knowing that this tradition has been sanctified by generations of saints, but as you walk and pray, try not to think of anything else. Just walk in the presence of God.

In these ten minutes, you will find that your fevered mind is soothed, that the noisy bazaar of your thoughts has become light, clear, and direct, and that your heart has begun to say other prayers in a manner that satisfies you. You pray, you breathe, you speak to God; you are not just repeating empty words. What does it mean to have your mind in your heart? It means that you are to control your feelings. You are not to admit invaders into your heart, but are to

check your heart with your mind, to observe everything that takes place there. To have your mind in your heart is exactly what our Lord prescribes to us in His commandment: "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret..."

What does it mean to shut the door? It means to banish every earthly image or passion with the concentration of your mind and will. When we pray we should not admit feelings of lust or open our hearts to the snake of irritation; we are to rid ourselves of everything that is unpleasant. To have your mind in your heart is to control the space of your heart. It is the kingdom of God Almighty and of nothing else.

If you make progress in this humble prayer, you will begin to understand that this commandment is very complete. Your heart will be filled with a spiritual warmth that embraces the center of your feelings. You will come to understand what attentive prayer is, and that your heart has been created for ceaseless prayer. Ceaseless prayer is not a perpetual repetition of this or that word or phrase. The Holy Fathers say that it is the feeling of your heart. Just as you view the objects of this world with open eyes, so your heart, warmed by prayer to God, will partake of the spiritual world. This will be due, not to your piety, but to God's grace. Unceasing prayer may have no words, but you will walk and sleep in the presence of God.

Archpriest Artemy Vladimirov  
*Road to Emmaus magazine*

# DEMOCRACY IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

*Fr. Stephen Freeman*

Nothing is equal because nothing is the same. All things are unique and unrepeatable. This is especially true of persons. Understanding this helps us deal with reality. But the mindset of our modern world suggests in a very seductive manner that things are quite different. It suggests that all things are indeed equal and that wherever inequality exists, it should be overthrown or corrected. Elsewhere, I have called this the “sin of democracy.” I do not mean that political arrangements that are democratic in nature are wrong. However, certain ideas in our modern world go far beyond political arrangements and suggest things about the nature of how things are. It is in these suggestions (and our accepting them as facts) that the “sin of democracy” can be found.

A quick note on positive aspects of democracy. I have always understood the political advantages of democracy as the ability to vote someone out of office – it is a protection against tyranny. It is not, however, a guarantee of good government, the best government, or wise government. It just means that with the vote, I can organize and vote something out that I want to change (maybe). Having said that, I want to give my attention to the spiritual aspect of what I mean by the “sin of democracy.”

The law wisely treats everyone as equal. Everyone should have equal rights before the law. But that will not make them equal. Medical personnel will likely have more accurate information about health matters than a six-year-old child. They are not equally qualified in medical matters. And that we recognize someone’s expertise does not mean we despise the less-qualified. However, we would be seriously insane if we treated all opinions as having equal weight.

What I mean by the “sin of democracy” is a sort of “interiorizing” of certain cultural assumptions and habits in such a manner

that they become the matrix of our spiritual understanding. For example, the Scriptures make clear that not all people are spiritually “equal.” Some in the Kingdom of God are greater than others (which implies that some are less).

There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. (1Co 15:40-41)

This passage, treating the question of the resurrection of our bodies, has traditionally also been seen as a reference to differences in eternity between one person and another. Christ Himself speaks of some as being “greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven,” or as being “least in the Kingdom of Heaven.” In the same manner, He speaks of some as having a “greater condemnation” than others, implying greater and lesser sufferings in hell.

These distinctions undermine the legal framework of salvation taught by many who hold to a disordered understanding of salvation. There is an extreme version within the legal model that holds that we are saved by grace alone, with no regard whatsoever to our works. If our salvation is truly a legal matter, if God “considers” us righteous simply because we believe (and that’s the end of the matter), then why indeed would He consider one more righteous than another. Thus, a kind of equality of grace is argued because anything else would seem unjust (if there is no merit involved whatsoever). But in the classical model of salvation, “grace” is not God’s “unmerited favor,” (simply a matter of how God thinks about us), it is, quite literally, the Divine Life, the Divine Energies. It is the life and power of God given to us in order to change us and conform us to the Divine Image through our union with the Crucified and Risen

Christ. And though no individual can possibly save themselves (because we cannot ourselves manufacture the Divine Energies), nonetheless, for varying reasons, some yield themselves more fully and completely to this work within them. Some, indeed, become great saints.

I say that this is for “varying reasons,” because we really cannot pierce within the mystery of each individual. There is doubtless some role played by the unique intention of God for their lives, but there are other mysteries which we cannot know. However, it is clear that “one star differs from another in glory.” For example, the Church says of the Mother of God that she is “more honorable than the cherubim, more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim.” This is clearly related both to her unique role in our salvation, as well as to her unique and total yielding of herself to God (“Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to Your word”).

The perversity of the democratic force within the spiritual life, however, reveals itself in our unwillingness to accept that someone might be greater than ourselves or more deserving of honor. Researching this matter, I ran across a question someone posed asking, “How can I be happy if someone receives more reward than I do?” I understand the question, but it is born of the perverse spirituality nurtured in a democracy that seeks to rule heaven itself.

The Kingdom of God (and all of reality) is hierarchical by nature. But its hierarchy is just that – a “sacred” (hieros) “order” (arche). In the case of Mary we can see how this hierarchy is not that of the world with its competition and violence. Mary sings, “You have exalted the humble and meek and the rich you have sent away empty.” The mere “arche” of the world is measured by power (and its frequent abuse). The hierarchy of the world (sacred order), however, is a hierarchy of grace in which self-emptying love is the greatest thing of all.

The devotional habits of the Church seek to inculcate in our hearts a proper regard for

this sacred order. The veneration given to the Mother of God, described as “hyperdulia” by the Fathers (“extreme honor”), teaches us not that she is equal to God, but that she is greater than I am. For strangely, when I refuse to grant that any other creature is greater than I am, then I am slowly drawn towards a heart that will not grant that the Creator Himself is greater. This gives us the refusal of the contemporary culture to acknowledge the limits of its own creaturehood. We imagine that we can be anything we want to be and that we are the creators of our own reality. Such a “creator” can only be found in the mirror.

There is a legend, widely cited in the Tradition, that in the great Council of heaven, before the creation of humanity, the archangel Lucifer saw the Theotokos and the dignity to which she would be raised. It is said that this sight stung his pride and provoked his rebellion. He could not bear to think that a creature who was mere dust could be greater than all the hosts of heaven (including himself). In his rebellion, his anger was directed less at God and more at us, for we were the cause of his humiliation. Thus, he became a “murderer from the beginning” (Joh 8:44).

That same spirit, unrecognized, breathes in our culture and its rebellion against the true hierarchy of heaven. The saintless equality of a democratic heaven is, strangely enough, only a colony of hell. There, only the private light of self is allowed to shine, no other being permitted to eclipse it.

I like living in a democracy for certain reasons, but I do not imagine it as the only way to live, nor do I want it to infect my heart such that I cannot bear to be less than another. The Kingdom of heaven calls us to become the least of all. And even that paradoxical excellence escapes me.

*Most Holy Mother of God, save us!*

## *DOSTOYEVSKY'S POWERFUL DENUNCIATION OF SOCIALISM*

Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* is arguably one of the greatest novels ever written. Kurt Vonnegut once wrote that *Brothers* is the one book "that can teach you everything you need to know about life."

Dostoyevsky has been praised for his deep and intense probing of the human psyche. *Brothers* is no exception. But the work is even more deeply metaphysical and theological than other Dostoyevsky masterpieces.

Perhaps no portion of *Brothers* has received more attention than the "Grand Inquisitor," a chapter in Part II in which one of the brothers, Ivan—the materialistic brother of Alyosha, a monk in training—shares a parable involving Christ's return. It runs like this:

*The tale is told by Ivan with brief interruptive questions by Alyosha. In the tale, Christ comes back to Earth in Seville at the time of the Inquisition. He performs a number of miracles (echoing miracles from the Gospels). The people recognize him and adore him, but he is arrested by Inquisition leaders and sentenced to be burnt to death the next day. The Grand Inquisitor visits him in his cell to tell him that the Church no longer needs him. The main portion of the text is devoted to the Inquisitor explaining to Jesus why his return would interfere with the mission of the Church.*

The parable is a chilling and brilliant storytelling. It reads almost like a story unto itself, and I encourage readers to read it in its entirety.

A key point in the parable is when the Inquisitor denounces Jesus for rejecting Satan during His temptation in the desert. Those familiar with the Gospels will recall that Satan beseeched Christ to turn stones into bread, throw himself from the Temple and have angels save him, and assert His rule over the kingdoms of Earth.

Interestingly, Dostoyevsky later explained the point he was making in regards to Satan's first temptation of Christ:

*"By the stones and the loaves of bread, I meant our present day social problems. Present-day socialism in Europe and in our country as well sets Christ aside and is first of all concerned with bread. It appeals to science and maintains that the cause of all human misfortune is poverty, the struggle for existence and the wrong kind of environment." (emphasis mine)*

It's an interesting point, especially when one considers Russia's subsequent seduction (rape?) by Bolshevism. Dostoyevsky, it seems to me, was getting at the pervasive problem of modern man. Materialism, in all its forms, is the timeless lure of humanity.

Now, it's important to note that nobody can accuse Dostoyevsky of not giving the Devil his due, which is what makes *Brothers* such a high piece of art. The most memorable and even persuasive parts of the book are the points made by skeptics such as Ivan and his father Fyodor, a sly sensualist and reprobate whose love of the material world serves as the catalyst for the novel's tragic events.

Ivan's Inquisitor is no different. He charges Jesus for refusing to give bread to the world because he "hungered for a faith based on free will and not on miracles," but he notes (rightly?) that man craves not God but miracles:

*Do you know that ages will pass and mankind will proclaim in its wisdom and science that there is no crime and, therefore, no sin, but that there are hungry people. 'Feed them first and then demand virtue of them!' – that is what they will raise against you and which will destroy your temple.'*

The Inquisitor's case is especially compelling when one considers Ivan's earlier descriptions of suffering and starving children. But it is one that must be rejected, in Dostoyevsky's view.

*Jon Miltimore is the Senior Editor of Intellectual Takeout. He is the former Senior Editor of The History Channel Magazine and a former Managing Editor at Scout Media.*

## Sunday offering for May 8

Amount	Number
\$15.00	1
\$18.00	1 (loose)
\$20.00	2
\$40.00	1
\$50.00	1
\$75.00	1
\$100.00	1
\$600.00	1
<hr/>	
\$938.00	

Parishioner Total: \$938.00

Average / parish household (42): \$12.03  
 Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2200.00

**Deficit: (\$1262.00)**

**Year-to-date deficit: (\$18,277.00)**

## Sunday offering for May 22

Amount	Number
\$5.00	1
\$15.00	2
\$20.00	3
\$30.00	1
\$50.00	4
\$85.00	1
\$120.00	1
\$133.00	1 (loose)
\$200.00	1
\$300.00	1
<hr/>	
\$1163.00	

Parishioner Total: \$1163.00

Average / parish household (42): \$14.91  
 Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2200.00

**Deficit: (1037.00)**

**Year-to-date deficit: (\$20,591.00)**

## Sunday offering for May 15

Amount	Number
\$10.00	1
\$15.00	2
\$20.00	3
\$25.00	1
\$48.00	1 (loose)
\$50.00	1
\$80.00	1
\$85.00	1
\$125.00	1
\$150.00	1
\$300.00	1
<hr/>	
\$1003.00	

Parishioner Total: \$963.00

Visitor Total: \$40.00

Average / parish household (42): \$11.83  
 Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2200.00

**Deficit: (\$1277.00)**

**Year-to-date deficit: (\$19,554.00)**

### PARISHIONERS THAT ARE HOME BOUND



If you or a loved one cannot make it to Church, Fr. James would be more than pleased visit at your home, in the hospital, at a nursing home, or any other place. It is no inconvenience at all.

Please be sure to schedule a visit.

#### Pastor:

Fr. James Bankston: (619) 905-5278

#### Pastoral Council:

Vladimir Bachynsky: (619) 865-1279

Mark Hartman: (619) 446-6357

Luke Miller: (858) 354-2008

#### Social Committee Chair:

Vacant

#### Finance Committee:

Bohdan Kniahynyckyj: (619) 303-9698



**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 Call of the Disciples*

And because we find something like this written: “God chose the weak things of this world to disconcert the strong, and the low-born things of this world he chose, and the things that are not like those that are, that the things that are might be brought to nothing” (1 Cor 1:27-28), we have to remind ourselves that our Lord Jesus Christ came not only for the salvation of the poor but also of the rich, not only of commoners, but also of kings. He refused, all the same, to choose kings for his disciples, refused rich people, refused the nobly born, refused the learned.

But instead he chose poor, uneducated, low-born fishermen, in whom His grace would shine through more clearly. He

came, you see, to give the potion of humility and to cure pride. And if He had first called a king, the king would have said that it was his rank that was chosen.

If He had first called a learned man, he would have said it was his teaching that was chosen. Those who were being called to lowliness and humility would have to be called by lowly and humble people. And so it is that Christ did not gain a fisherman through an emperor, but an emperor through a fisherman.

*St. Augustine of Hippo*

**For more information on Eastern spirituality, visit  
[www.ecpubs.com](http://www.ecpubs.com)**