

SUNDAY OF ALL SAINTS



Icon of All Saints



May 31, 2015

SUNDAY OF ALL SAINTS – TONE 8

THE HOLY APOSTLE HERMAS, AUTHOR OF “THE SHEPHERD”

THE HOLY MARTYR HERMES

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 1 – JUNE 7

SATURDAY, JUNE 6

6:00 PM – Great Vespers

SUNDAY, JUNE 7 – 2ND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; THE HOLY HIEROMARTYR THEODOTUS, BISHOP OF ANCYRA

8:45 AM – Divine Praises

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!*

Parish Meeting

A date of June 28 has been set for a general meeting of the parish. This meeting will run from 12:00 noon until 1:30 PM and will have several agenda items:

1. Parish Finances
2. Parking Lot
3. Parish Needs (roof, etc...)
4. Stewardship

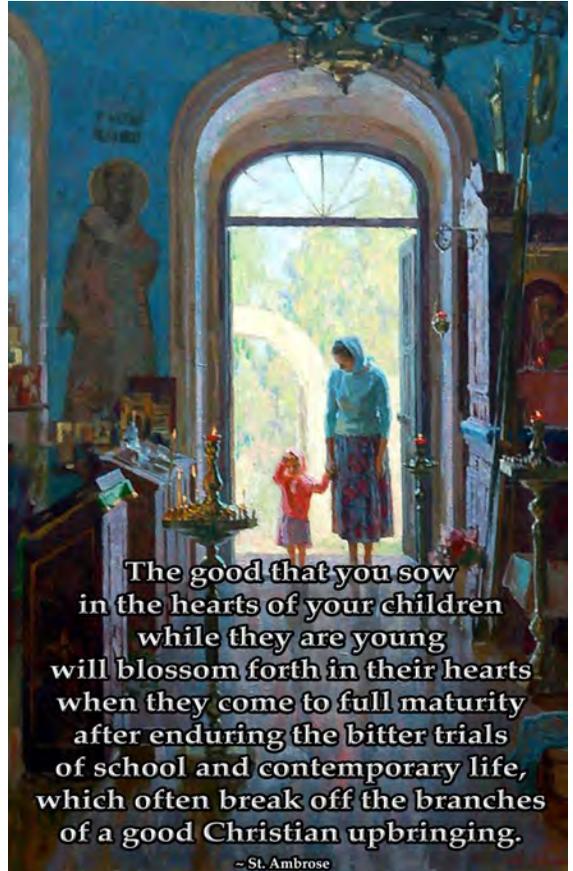
There will be an opportunity for individuals to speak. Those wishing to be added to the list of speaker must inform Fr. James by June 21st.

Warm Welcome!

We warmly welcome all of our visitors, especially the students and teachers from St. Augustine High School! It’s good to have you with us!

Never confuse the person formed in the image of God, with the evil that is in him: because evil is but a chance misfortune, an illness, a devilish reverie. But the very essence of the person is the image of God, and this remains in him despite every disfigurement.

- St. John of Kronstadt



**The good that you sow
in the hearts of your children
while they are young
will blossom forth in their hearts
when they come to full maturity
after enduring the bitter trials
of school and contemporary life,
which often break off the branches
of a good Christian upbringing.**

- St. Ambrose

SUNDAY OF ALL SAINTS

We are obliged, not only to venerate the saints and to seek the assistance of the saints, but also to imitate their life and holiness. All Christians are called to holiness by virtue of the sacrament of Baptism. Every person, regardless of status and condition of life, can become a Saint and is duty-bound to strive after holiness of life. Our Lord Jesus Christ

addressed all people without exception when He said: “Therefore, be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). St. Paul also reminds us of our duty to pursue holiness: “This is the will of God – your sanctification” (1 Cor 4:3). What is holiness? Holiness is living according to the commandments of God and the Church; it is the daily fulfilment

of God’s will, constant fidelity to the duties of one’s state, or more briefly – holiness is the Gospel translated into action. The Servant of God Metropolitan Andrew Sheptytsky speaks beautifully of the significance of the Gospel for our life and holiness:

“In my opinion,” he says, “the source of our failures and of all the plagues that afflict our church and national life, is our failure

to apply ourselves seriously to living our Christianity and the teachings of the Gospel, and for this reason, we do not convey to others the aura of holiness ... The Gospel is the road to heaven; it is a life without blemish, without reproach, without vice; it is a pure, innocent, holy life by which mortal man aspires to emulate the heavenly angels.

The Gospel is the way of the cross leading to the hill of Golgotha. The Christian life is a life in which each person carries a cross, suffers, and follows in the footsteps of Jesus Christ ... Life according to the teachings of the Gospel is the supernatural life of God’s grace, a life of God’s love and of the sacrifice for God or in a word: it is a life in which each person seeks and aspires to holiness of life” (On Education).

The saints in heaven, then, are God’s beloved and intimate friends; and our protectors, intercessors and benefactors; our guides and models on the path to virtue and sanctity.

(from *A Byzantine Rite Liturgical Year* by Fr. Julian Katrij, OSBM)



NO WEDDING VOWS

Fr. Stephen Freeman

<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/glory2godforallthings/2013/07/26/no-wedding-vows/>

(Please note: the use of “Orthodox” in this article should be understood to include Eastern Catholic. The existence of vows in some Eastern Catholic crowning services are a form of “Latinization” that is foreign to our authentic tradition. - Fr. James)

Few things differ more clearly between Eastern and Western Christianity than the service of Holy Matrimony. There are things found in Western Christian Marriage ceremonies that cannot be found in the East just as there are things in the East that cannot be found in the West. In many languages of the Eastern Churches, the service for a marriage is referred to as the “Crowning” – named for the central act within the ceremony – the crowning of the bride and groom. However nothing separates the marriage ceremonies of East and West like the place of marriage vows: there are no wedding vows in an Orthodox wedding.

Those unfamiliar with Orthodox weddings are often taken aback by this fact – **how can there be a wedding without vows?** How can a couple actually be married if they make no promises? I have heard it observed wryly that in Orthodoxy, we do not require the bride and groom to perjure themselves on their wedding day! But the absence of vows points to more than ceremonial differences – the theology of marriage differs greatly – and it is a difference worth pondering.

In the Orthodox wedding the couple is first “betrothed” with the exchange of rings. Led into the center of the Church, the priest offers prayers. In the course of those prayers, in something of an “epiclesis” (the calling down of the Holy Spirit to accomplish a particular purpose – present in all the sacraments of the Church), the priest asks God to be present; to bless the marriage; to preserve their bed unassailed; to give them the dew of heaven; to fill their houses with every good thing; to send down heavenly grace to bless, preserve and remember the bride and groom; and just prior to the crowning:

stretch out now also Thy hand from Thy holy dwelling-place, and unite this Thy servant, N. and this Thy handmaiden, N.; for by Thee is the husband joined unto the wife. Unite them in one mind; wed

them into one flesh, granting to them the fruit of the body and the procreation of fair children.

And then the priest crowns the couple (three times), saying each time: “Crown them with glory and honor!” (see Psalm 8:5)

In contrast, the marriage in the West finds its focus within the exchange of vows. “Do you... take this woman...to have and to hold, to love and to cherish...etc. as long as you both shall live?” I was taught, when I was an Anglican, that the “ministers” of the sacrament of marriage are the couple themselves. The priest witnesses, and prays for God’s blessing.

This centerpiece of marriage in the West has been a subject of great creativity in the last number of decades. “Writing your own vows,” has been an essential undertaking for many couples (and probably the source of more than a little angst). I have seen examples of beauty and examples of triteness beyond description.

The role of vows in Western marriage is also bearing some very strange fruit.

Our culture, following the logic of vows, views marriage as a contract between two people. Specific promises concerning performance (and non-performance) are offered. These details of the contract are “witnessed” (for that is the language of the license itself). A Church offers a blessing, but the essential nature of a civil ceremony and a religious ceremony are found only in music and the trappings, not in the ceremony itself. I have often wondered whether the state would declare Orthodox marriages to be null and void if it were to learn that there are no promises made or accepted.

This contract view of marriage has become problematic in the current civil discussions of same-sex marriages. If marriage is a contract, how can anything be an essential problem to any two people entering such a contract? If they are both willing to acknowledge the requests and requirements expected of them, how can anyone say they have no right to have such an arrangement? Marriage as contract is wide-open.

However, there is no contract in an Orthodox marriage. A couple present themselves to God within the Church and it is there that the sacrament occurs. The power of God comes upon the lives of a man and a woman and unites them in one mind and weds them in one flesh. **The sacrament is a union, not a contract.**

Not all people can be united. St. Paul warns of false or corrupted unions:

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. (1Co 6:15-20 NKJ)

Paul moves seamlessly in this short exhortation between sexual union with a harlot and spiritual union with Christ. Clearly, for St. Paul, union is union. But in neither case is union a contract.

It would seem obvious that if marriage is a contract, then almost any contract is theoretically possible (perhaps much less than advisable, but not impossible). However, in the Orthodox understanding, the union of a marriage is fulfilled most commonly in procreation. It is fulfilled mystically in the "one flesh" (of which procreation is but one example). Not every marriage union is blessed with children, but such a fulfillment is considered normative. Couples beyond the age of conception have certainly conceived children within Orthodox tradition (Abraham and Sarah, Joachim and Anna, etc.). **But attempts to create a union out of what cannot be a union, nor bears even the most remote possibility of union, are outside the bounds of matrimony. There is no denying that relationships, even contracts might be created, but a union is something entirely**

different. St. Paul does not use the argument of union to oppose same sex relationships – for union there is not possible. His objections (and those of the Church) rest on other grounds.

In some ways, it would make sense for Orthodoxy to object to all marriage in the Western model because of its contractual basis. However, such objections have never been made. As civil societies continue to experiment with new definitions, however, such objections might be worth considering. The objection would not be an effort to declare marriage as a contract to be null and void, but simply woefully misunderstood.

The obligations of marriage are not enjoined by the terms of a contract – they are rather the obligations enjoined by our own "flesh and bones." I do not need a contract with the atmosphere in order to breathe – I need to breathe in order to live. The analogy is not perfect, but is not inapt.

Pondering all of this, I once wondered if we should stop using the word "sex" to describe what a man and woman have with one another. Instead, **I wondered how it would be if we called that activity "marriage"?** **"Have you had marriage with that girl?"** Perhaps such a shift in language would better help people understand the nature of sexual activity.

Words and ceremonies matter, particularly when their nature and the context changes. The language and concept of contract served the West for many centuries. I believe that it created an overly legal understanding of a relationship that would have been better described in organic terms. Today, contract has triumphed over organic objections and the language (and ceremony) seem to be coming up short.

The language of the understanding of marriage within the Eastern model might suggest possible ways for other Christians to think as well. It certainly behooves Orthodox Christians to ponder deeply the substance of the Tradition that is theirs. It would make good sense if Orthodox Christians were to rid themselves of the confusion of contractual imagery that might have been inadvertently absorbed.

Crown them, O Lord, with glory and honor!



Reflections

MEN WITHOUT CHESTS

In his book, *The Abolition of Man*, Lewis was prophetic in pointing out that relativism—the idea that there are no absolute truths—would lead to the decay of morality and a lack of virtue within society. Without a belief in and the teaching of universal moral laws, we fail to educate the heart and are left with intelligent men who behave like animals or as Lewis puts it, “Men without Chests.” Read slowly to follow Lewis’s apologetic:

It still remains true that no justification of virtue will enable a man to be virtuous. Without the aid of trained emotions the intellect is powerless against the animal organism. I had sooner play cards against a man who was quite sceptical about ethics, but bred to believe that ‘a gentleman does not cheat’, than against an irreproachable moral philosopher who had been brought up among sharpers. In battle it is not syllogisms (logical arguments) that will keep the reluctant nerves and muscles to their post in the third hour of the bombardment. The crudest sentimentalism ... about a flag or a country or a regiment will be of more use. We were told it all long ago by Plato. As the king governs by his executive, so Reason in man must rule the mere appetites by means of the ‘spirited element’. The head rules the belly through the chest—the seat, as Alanus tells us, of Magnanimity, of emotions organized by trained habit into stable sentiments. The Chest-Magnanimity-Sentiment—these are the indispensable liaison officers between cerebral man and visceral man. It may even be said that it is by this middle element that man is man: for by his intellect he is mere spirit and by his appetite mere animal. The operation of *The Green Book* (a book promoting relativism) and its kind is to produce what may be called Men without Chests. ... A persevering devotion to truth, a nice sense of intellectual honour, cannot be long maintained without the aid of a sentiment... It is not excess of thought but defect of fertile and generous emotion that marks them out. Their heads are no bigger than the ordinary: it is the atrophy of the chest beneath that makes them seem so.

And all the time—such is the tragi-comedy of our situation—we continue to clamour for those very qualities we are rendering impossible. You can hardly open a periodical without coming across the statement that what our civilization needs is more ‘drive’, or dynamism, or self-sacrifice, or ‘creativity’. In a sort of ghastly simplicity we remove the organ and demand the function. We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honour and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and bid the geldings be fruitful.¹

The Apostle Paul writes, “The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith (1 Timothy 1:5, ESV).”

If followers of Christ live as people with chests—strong hearts filled with God’s truth—the world will take notice.

1 C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), pp. 35–37.

A Note on Kneeling

Now that Pentecost has arrived, kneeling is no longer forbidden for weekday Liturgical Services. Kneeling is reintroduced into the **weekday** Liturgical services with the Kneeling Prayers (which technically are part of Vespers for Monday.) Kneeling is **still prohibited for all Sundays**. "Because kneeling is a sign of penance in the Eastern tradition, the faithful should be discouraged from kneeling during the Paschal Season and on **all** Sundays of the year. The faithful should be properly instructed as to the reasons why kneeling at these times is not congruent with the theology of the Eastern Churches." (Art. 464 § 1 - *Pastoral Guide of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the USA*.)

One day a group of scientists got together and decided that man had come a long way and no longer needed God. They picked one scientist to go and tell Him that they were done with Him. The scientist walked up to God and said, "God, we've decided that we no longer need you. We're to the point that we can clone people and do many miraculous things, so why don't you just go on and get lost."

God listened patiently and kindly to the man and, after the scientist was done talking, God said, "Very well! How about this? Let's have a man-making contest."

To which the man replied, "OK, great!"

But God added, "Now we're going to do this just like I did back in the old days with Adam."

The scientist said, "Sure, no problem" and bent down and grabbed himself a handful of dirt.

God just looked at him and said, "No, no, no. You go get your own dirt!"

Roof Campaign



The hall roof is in dire need of repair. There are at least six separate leaks. Numerous patch jobs have failed to solve the problems. The current drought has minimized the problem but we continue to pray for rain anyway. There is good news and bad news: The good news is - we have the money; the bad news is - it's still in your pockets. We will be soliciting quotes for repairs soon. Know a roofer you would recommend?

Roof Repair Challenge

An anonymous donor has given \$1000.00 towards the repair of the hall roof. The donor has challenged the rest of the parish to contribute to this cause so that the roof can be fully repaired rather than patched.

Roof Challenge Response: \$1550.00

Pastor:

Fr. James Bankston: (619) 905-5278

Pastoral Council:

Vladimir Bachynsky: (619) 865-1279

Mark Hartman: (619) 446-6357

Luke Miller: (858) 354-2008

Jeanine Soucie: (718) 674-4529

Social Committee Chairperson:

Megan Hartman (619) 540-4291

Finance Committee:

Bohdan Knianicky: (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

Pastor: Fr. James Bankston
frjames@mac.com
Fr. James' cell phone: (619) 905-5278

The Happiness of the Saints

Happy is that person of love who has caused God, who is love, to dwell in his heart.

Happy are you, O heart, so small and confined, yet you have caused Him whom heaven and earth cannot contain to dwell spiritually in your womb, as in a restful abode.

Happy that luminous eye of the heart which, in its purity, clearly beholds Him before whose sight the seraphim veil their faces.

Blessed indeed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are you, O heart that is luminous, the abode of the Divinity;

Blessed are you, heart that is pure, which beholds the hidden Being.

Happy are you, O flesh and blood, the dwelling place of the Consuming Fire;

Happy are you, mortal body made out of

dust, wherein resides the Fire that sets the world alight.

It is truly a matter for wonder and astonishment that He, before whom the heavens are not pure, who puts awe into His angels, should take delight and pleasure in a heart of flesh that is filled with love for Him, that is open to Him, that is purified so as to act as His holy dwelling place, joyfully serving and ministering to Him in whose presence thousand upon thousand, ten thousand upon ten thousand fiery angels stand in awe, as they minister to His glory.

*Bishop Martyrius of Beth Garmani, Iraq
(7th cent.)*

**For more information on Eastern spirituality, visit
www.theosismedia.com**