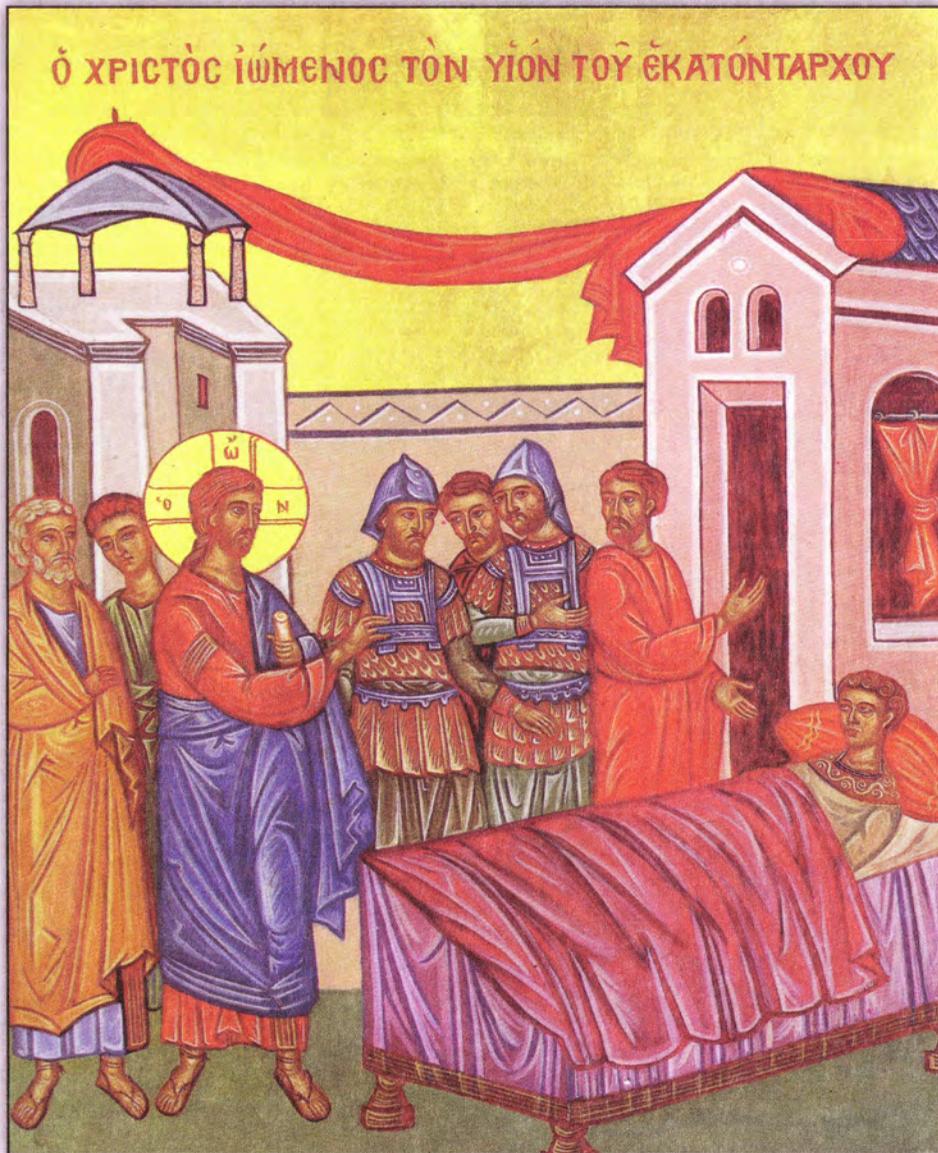


FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of Christ Healing the Centurion's Servant



June 12, 2016

4TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ALL SAINTS OF RUS'-UKRAINE

OUR VENERABLE FATHER, ONUPHRIUS THE GREAT

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 13 – JUNE 19

SATURDAY, JUNE 18

Please Note: **NO** Vespers this evening

SUNDAY, JUNE 19 – 5TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; *THE HOLY APOSTLE JUDE, BROTHER OF THE LORD*

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

For All Parishioners

Stupidity is a more dangerous enemy of the good than evil is. Against evil, one can protest; it can be exposed and, if necessary, stopped with force. Evil always carries the seed of its own self-destruction, because it at least leaves people with a feeling of uneasiness. But against stupidity, we are defenseless. Neither with protest nor with force can we do anything here; reasons have no effect. Facts that contradict one's own prejudice need only to be disbelieved — in such cases stupid people even become critical, and when facts are unavoidable, they can simply be swept aside as meaningless isolated cases. Stupid people, in contrast to evil ones, are satisfied with themselves. Indeed, they become dangerous in that they may easily be stimulated to go on the attack. Therefore, more care must be taken in regard to stupidity than to evil...

Closer examination reveals that every strong external development of power, whether of a political or religious nature, strikes a large portion of the people with stupidity...

The biblical saying, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, (but fools despise wisdom and instruction)" [Proverbs 1:7] says that the internal liberation of people for responsible life before God is the only real way to overcome stupidity.

~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer ~

PARISH MEETING

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

Please plan to attend this important meeting.



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.



Haven't Seen Someone in a While?

Give them a call or send them an email. See how they are doing. Let them know that you not only miss them but also care enough to see if everything is okay. A kind word can go a long way.

WHY DOES GOD HIDE?

Fr. Stephen Freeman

God hides. God makes Himself known.
God hides.

This pattern runs throughout the Scriptures. A holy hide-and-seek, the pattern is not accidental nor unintentional. It is rooted in the very nature of things in the Christian life. Christianity whose God is not hidden is not Christianity at all. But why is this so?

In my previous article, I wrote:

Our faith is about learning to live in the revealing of things that were hidden. True Christianity should never be obvious. It is, indeed, the struggle to live out what is not obvious. The Christian life is rightly meant to be an apocalypse.

God is not obvious. That which is obvious is an object. Objects are inert, static and passive. The tree in my front yard is objectively there (or so it seems). When I get up in the morning and take the dog outside, I expect the tree to be there. If it is autumn, I might study its leaves for their wonderful color change (it's a Gingko). But generally, I can ignore the tree – or not. That's what objects are good for. They ask nothing of us. The freedom belongs entirely to us, not to them.

This is the function of an idol – to make a god into an object. He/she/it must be there. The idol captures the divine, objectifies it and renders it inert and passive.

The God of the Christians smashes idols. He will not stay put or become a passive participant in our narcissism. He is not the God-whom-I-want.

Christ tells us, “Ask, and you will receive. Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened.” The very center of the life promised us in Christ requires asking, seeking and knocking. The reason is straightforward: asking, seeking and knocking are a mode of existence. But our usual mode of existence is to live an obvious life.

Have you ever noticed that it's easier to buy an icon and add it to your icon corner, than it is to actually spend time and pray in your corner? There is a kind of “Orthodox acquisitiveness” that substitutes for asking, seeking and knocking. Acquisition is part of our obvious form of existence. We have been trained in our culture to consume. We acquire objects. On the whole, we don't even have to seek the objects we acquire, other than to engage in a little googling. We no longer forage or hunt. We shop.

But we were created to ask, seek and knock. That mode of existence puts us in the place where we become truly human. The Fathers wrote about this under the heading of eros, desire. Our culture has changed the meaning of eros into erotic, in which we learn to consume through our passions. This is a distortion of true *eros*.

Christ uses the imagery of seeking (*eros*) in a number of His parables: The Merchant in Search of Fine Pearls; The Woman with the Lost Coin; The Good Shepherd and the Lost Sheep; The Father in the Prodigal Son; The Treasure Buried in a Field...

But how does seeking (*eros*) differ from what I want? Are these parables not images of consuming? Learning the difference is part of the point in God's holy hide-and-seek. The mode of existence to which He calls us must be learned, and it must be learned through practice.

Objects are manageable. They do not overwhelm or ask too much of us. Consumption is an activity in which we ourselves always have the upper hand. St. James offers this thought:

You desire and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. (James 4:2-3)

What we seek (*eros*) in a godly manner, is something that cannot be managed or objectified. It is always larger and greater than we are. As such, it even presents a little danger. It may require that we be vulnerable and take risks. We are afraid that we might not find it while also being afraid that we will.

The parables are not about a merchant with a string of pearls, or a woman with a coin collection. The merchant risks everything he owns just for the chance of buying this one pearl. The woman seeks this coin as though there were no other money in the world.

When I was nearing the point of my conversion to Orthodoxy, a primary barrier was finding secular employment. It's hard for someone whose resume only says, "priest," to get a job, or even an interview for a job. That search had gone on, quietly, for nearly two years. It was not an obsession – rather, more like a hobby. But one day, a job found me. The details are not important here. But the reality is. The simple fact that a job was likely to happen, that I only had to say, "Yes," was both exciting and frightening in the extreme. If I said yes, then everything I had said I wanted would start to come true (maybe). And everything I knew as comfortable and secure would disappear (with four children to feed). And if everything I said I wanted started coming true, then the frightening possibility that I might not actually want it would also be revealed! I could multiply all of these possibilities many times over and not even begin to relate everything that was in my heart.

But the point that was at hand was the beginning of the true search. The risk, the reward, the threat, the danger, the joy and the sorrow, all of them loomed over me, frequently driving me to prayer. I made the leap and began a tumultuous period in my life. But my life, like most, eventually settled down and slowly became obvious.

St. Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, one of the great monastic heroes of the Celtic lands, had a way of dealing with the obvious. He would walk into the North Sea from the island where he lived, and stand in the waves up to his neck. It was a dangerous sea, not like an American beach. He stood there at the point of danger – and prayed. St. Brendan crossed the Atlantic with his monastic companions in a boat made of animal hides. Countless thousands of monastics wandered into deserts, forests, holes in the ground, islands, all in order to place themselves at that point where God may be found. Seeking God is not done in the place of safety, though it is the safest place in all the world.

Eros does not shop. True desire, that which is actually endemic to our nature, is not satisfied with the pleasures sought by the passions. It will go to extreme measures, even deep into pain, in order to be found by what it seeks.

All of this is the apocalyptic life of true faith. The question for us is how to live there, or even just go there for once in our lives. I “studied” Orthodoxy for

20 years. All of my friends knew (and often joked) about my interest. Many said they were not surprised when I converted.

I was. I was surprised because I know my own cowardice and fear of shame. If you liked Ferraris, your friends wouldn't be surprised if you had photos and models, films and t-shirts. It might become obnoxious. But if you sold your house and used the money to make a down payment on one, you'd be thought a fool, possibly insane. Seeking God is like that.

There are quiet ways that do not appear so radical. The right confession before a priest can be such a moment. Prayer before the icons in the corner of a room can become such a moment, though it takes lots of practice and much attention. They cannot be objects and the prayer cannot be obvious.

All of this is of God, may He be thanked. We do not have to invent all of this for ourselves. It is not “technique.” The God who wants us to seek is also kind enough to hide. Finding out where He is hiding is the first step. Finding out where you are hiding is the next. But the greatest and most wonderful step is turning the corner, buying the field, selling everything that you have, picking up the coin, making that phone call, saying “yes” and “yes” and “yes.”

ASK FATHER:

Question: Is there a dress code in the Church, and if so, why?

Answer: First, it should be said, that it is a recent phenomenon in some Roman Catholic and Protestant churches to advertise “casual”, “relaxed” or even no dress code at all for worship and fellowship. This answer will not directly critique this practice other than to say that this has never been part of and is in clear contrast with Christian tradition.

Both the Old and New Testaments are full of calls to modesty and respectfulness not only in inward spirit but also in outward appearance as the one is connected to and influences the other. Since the time of Adam and Eve, who covered themselves with clothing after the Fall, the way in which one dressed has been directly connected to the way in which one relates to God and one’s neighbor. Cleanliness, simplicity, appropriateness, humility, etc., are not only virtues of the soul but also virtues of the body, which, St. Paul tells us, is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Question: What’s the dress code?

Answer: The Scriptures offer us a dress code, with not only calls to the aforementioned virtuous principles, but also specific details in relation to: cross-dressing (Deut. 22:5), body markings (Deut. 14:1, Lev. 19:28), braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire (1 Tim. 2:9, 1 Pet. 3:3-4), and head coverings (1 Cor. 11) to name a few.

Now to be sure each of these references has nuances related to culture and epoch; for example men wear kilts in Scotland. Yet, just as it would be incorrect to overlook these nuances, so too would be incorrect to be dismissive of the teaching itself. Therefore, throughout the Christian world, the Scriptural teaching remains the ideal or standard, yet the application remains pastorally flexible in order to bring about spiritual growth and progress in the faithful. For this reason, one will observe both strict adherence to the dress code such as in monasteries or parishes whose faithful are from traditionally Christian cultures, as well as appropriate flexibility in churches who pastorally care for and missionize non-Christian societies. In general, it is a good idea to be aware of the dress code, and not only refrain from being critical of it but also to respectfully follow it because it has salvific import for us and others.

Question: What is the dress code at our Parish?

Answer: There are four basic categories:

1) men, 2) women, 3) children, and 4) everyone.

1) Men should not wear hats, bandanas, shorts, sleeveless shirts, or casual footwear like sneakers. Shirts should be buttoned. Leaving the top button unbuttoned is OK if no tie is worn. Tight fitting clothing is just as inappropriate for men as for women.

2) Women should not wear miniskirts, spandex-tight clothing, low-cut or revealing tops (unless covered with a sweater or other garment), or casual footwear like sneakers.

3) Children should be given a little more flexibility but should still wear “church clothes” so that they know they are somewhere that is special and holy.

4) Everyone should refrain from clothing that is immodest, ostentatious, a fashion-statement, or otherwise distracting from the prayerful and sacred space of the Lord’s House. Clothing or bodily adornments with images, symbols, or writing should not be worn or at least covered up, so that the holy icons and Word of God do not have to compete with the logo of our favorite sport team, the name of a music band, or the slogan of our political party.

This being said, we should not take it upon ourselves to enforce the dress code upon anyone else, especially visitors to our Church. As people become familiar with our way, they will slowly start to adapt themselves to the ways of the Church, naturally growing in Christ with that which pertains to both soul and body. If you have questions or concerns, please speak with Fr. James.



EVERYWHERE PRESENT

Fr. Stephen Freeman

Everything you do, all your work, can contribute towards your salvation. It depends on you, on the way you do it. History is replete with monks who became great saints while working in the kitchen or washing sheets. The way of salvation consists in working without passion, in prayer....

May God give you the strength to keep your spirit, your mind, and your heart in the spirit of Christ. Then everything that happens to you can very quickly be radically transformed. What was tiresome and discouraging will disappear, transfigured by your desire to be there where Christ your God is....

Elder Sophrony of Essex

The wise elder's words are not only good for our salvation (which is always at hand) but also remind us that we should not divide our lives into two worlds. Even monks have to wash dishes...

If we concede that some of our life is drudgery, mindless, but needful, while other parts of our life are interesting and of value to God, then we have ourselves created a two-storey universe of our inner world. "This part of my life is of no value – while this part is of great value." This, of course, is nonsense. Even service in the Holy Altar frequently includes washing dishes.

The words of the elder teach us that the problem of the two-storey universe is to be found primarily in our own heart – not in the culture around us nor in the tasks we find at hand. God is everywhere present and filling all things. He is even present and filling the various tasks of "drudgery" we undertake. No task is beneath us. The Mother of God changed the diapers of the God of heaven. Our love for those around us should be no less. We are moved when we read in John that 'Jesus wept' at the grave of Lazarus, His friend. The Theotokos had long before heard Him weep and wail as all children do. Nor should any mother (or father) give less value to the weeping of their own children. God has invested everything with His love, transforming the world into the stage of our salvation. Glory to God for all things and in all things – always and everywhere.

Sunday offering for June 5

Amount	Number
\$5.00	1
\$15.00	2
\$20.00	2
\$40.00	1
\$50.00	2
\$85.00	1
\$100.00	1
\$150.00	1
\$300.00	1
<hr/>	
\$850.00	

Parishioner Total: \$850.00

Average / parish household (42): \$10,90

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2200.00

Deficit: (\$1350.00)

Year-to-date deficit: (\$23,493.00)

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

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

Such Faith

The Savior had now set out upon His way to restore the sick man; but the centurion said to him, trouble not yourself, but speak with a word, and my child will be healed. Consider, then, that these elders of the Jews begged Jesus to go to the house of him who requested His aid, as not being able in any other way to raise him up who was lying ill, except by going to his side. Whereas the other believed that he could do it even at a distance, and effect it by the inclination of His will. He asked for the saving word, the loving assent, the all mighty utterance; and justly, therefore, did he win a sentence of surpassing worth; for Jesus said, "Verily I say to you, that not even in Israel have I found so great faith." The proof then, and demonstration, follows closely and immediately from what we have now said. Finally, He delivered that same hour from his sickness him who a little before

had been the prey of death; for he who willed the undoing of what had happened was God ...

The heathen were called and admitted, as having a heart better prepared for that faith in him, which justly is required. ... They went quickly to the faith, that is, they were not slow in accepting the commands of Christ, but very readily embraced the faith. For that they were to be caught in Christ's net, He teaches you where He says by one of the holy prophets, "For this wait for me," says the Lord, "until the day of my rising up to bear witness, because my judgment is for the congregations of the heathen." For when Christ rose from the dead, He bestowed on those that were in error that judgment which is for their happiness and salvation.

St. Cyril of Alexandria

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