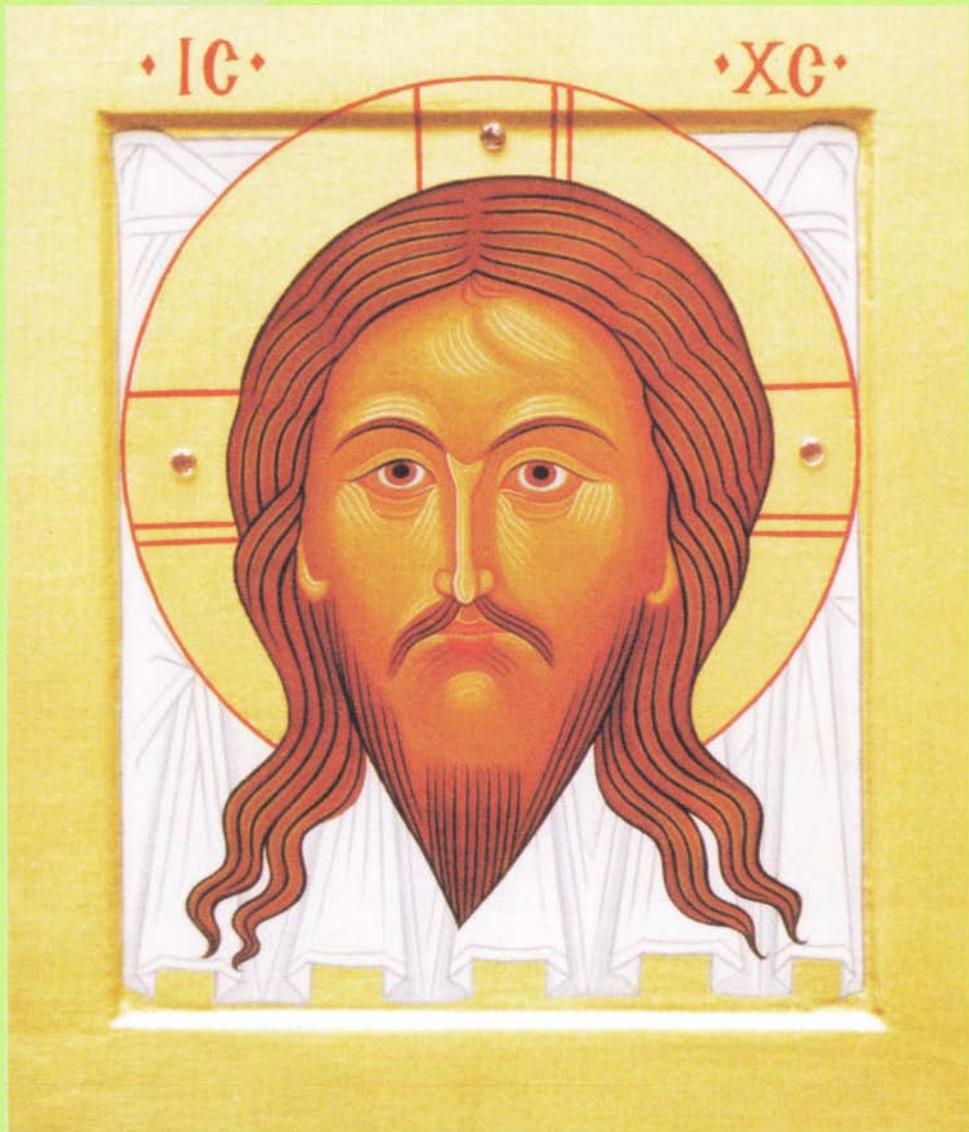


ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of the Image Not Made by Human Hands

PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR HEART IS

Our money has a way of going in the same direction as our thoughts. It has a way of gravitating toward those things which mean the most to us. The money of the heavy drinker has a way of ending up in the local tavern, while the money of the compulsive gambler rolls irresistibly into the coffers of the nearest race track.

On the other hand, he who through faith in Christ has given himself over to the service of the Lord and to the service of his fellowman will find himself giving of his earthly treasure for these selfsame purposes: the service of God and the service of man.

He will inevitably find himself putting his money where his heart is. The direction of his money will, in a very real sense, reveal the direction of his life (H. W. Gockel).

AN UNPAYABLE DEBT

Stewardship is not like leaving a tip on God's tablecloth; it is the acknowledgement of an unpayable debt incurred at Calvary where God so loved me that He gave His only Son so that I who believe in Him may not perish but have life everlasting.

Sunday Collection: August 9, 2008:

9:00 AM	\$286.00
<u>Second Collection (Eparchial Youth Ministry):</u>	<u>\$10.00</u>
Total:	\$296.00

Summer Liturgical Schedule (July – September) **(unless otherwise noted in the bulletin):**

Sundays 9:00 AM (Bi-Lingual)

Holyday Vigil: 6:00 PM

Holyday Liturgy: 9:00 AM

Other Services as announced in Bulletin

The Holy Mystery of Reconciliation
(Confession): Sundays from 8:30 to 8:45 AM and also by appointment.

The Holy Mysteries of Initiation (Baptism, Chrismation and Holy Eucharist): Parents must make arrangements with the Pastor at least 3 months prior to Initiation. Adults seeking to be initiated must undergo a period of instruction (Catechumenate.)

The Holy Mystery of Crowning (Marriage): The couple must contact the Pastor at least 6 months prior to the desired date of marriage and **before** scheduling anything related to the crowning (including the reception.) Couples must participate in pre-marriage catechesis.

The Holy Mystery of Anointing of the Sick: Please inform the Pastor of anyone in need of anointing or anyone homebound and unable to attend Liturgy or receive Holy Eucharist.

Catechesis: Contact the Pastor.

Cantors: Vladimir Bachynsky, Luke Miller and Olena Bankston



Beginning the Journey

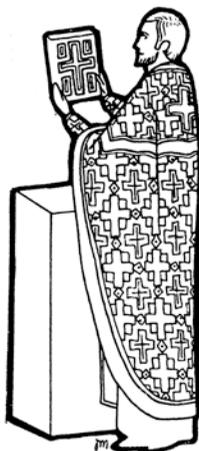
When we come to the life-giving chalice on Sunday morning, we come in the totality of who we are and all that we have done. We stand at the chalice marked by the experiences of the past week—with all our sins, all our brokenness, all our ongoing struggles, all our spiritual victories. To experience the fullness of the Lord's saving presence at that holy moment and to find healing for our sinful brokenness and strength for future victories, we need to be fully there.

It is all too easy *not* to be fully there. We may arrive bodily at the chalice and still have our mind, our heart, our emotions, all our inner resources someplace else. For this reason, our Sunday morning journey to the chalice and to the Kingdom of God does not begin when we first enter the church temple. Rather, it begins the moment we arise from sleep that morning, before we leave our beds, wash ourselves, dress in our Sunday best, and drive to church. We must rise from bed anticipating our encounter with Christ, resolving to stand before the chalice with all our spiritual powers focused upon Him.

Our spiritual preparation is not just a matter of keeping certain disciplines, important as these are. Certainly, we must keep these disciplines: we must say the appointed precommunion prayers; we must spend Saturday evening in peace (no wild partying until two in the morning!), attending Great Vespers that evening if possible; we should fast from midnight (according to the ancient, authentic tradition.) All this is true, but it does not get to the heart of the matter. For the heart of the matter has to do with *the* heart, that interior spring of motivation and longing. We must ask ourselves: Do we really want to meet God? Do we really want to be transformed—even if this is painful and involves change and inconvenience and loss? How badly do we long to meet Christ and be changed into His glorious image?

We may say that we want these things, but something lives in us that doesn't want them at all. Coming to the church temple is one thing, but meeting Christ in our interior temple and allowing Him to dismantle and change us is quite another. We find it easy to come to church, to sing along with the choir, to say the prayers-and still to remain inwardly "safe" and spiritually withdrawn from Christ, determined not to depart from the church dangerously changed. God has said that no one can see Him and live (Ex. 33:20). If we really meet Christ, the false part of ourselves will not live. We find this scary, and some part of us shrinks from it.

When we rise from our beds, therefore, we must consciously determine to meet Christ, who waits for us in the Liturgy, even if this encounter will hurt and change us. For it will only hurt our false selves; the pain that we endure brings our ultimate healing. So, when we open our eyes on Sunday morning, we must act and speak as those who will soon meet Christ. This affects how we relate to one another on the way to church. How can we speak cruel and cutting things to our family members on the way to the service and then expect Christ to bless us at the chalice? How can we open our mouths to insult others just hours or minutes before opening our mouths to receive Christ's Body and Blood? We take our first steps in the "Communion line" when we step from our beds. We must arise in expectation and walk in humility and kindness as we journey to the Kingdom.



“Blessed Is the Kingdom!”

The Liturgy we pray today has undergone many changes, developments, and evolutions in the past centuries. It begins now with the mighty and triumphal opening benediction, “Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit!” to which the assembled Church responds, “Amen!” (The Church

added this opening exclamation in about the eleventh century.) As the celebrant chants this, he takes the Holy Gospel in his hands and blesses the altar table with it, making the sign of the cross over the place where the sacrament of the Kingdom is to be celebrated, thus preparing the table for its holy use.

Significantly, our eucharistic worship opens with this glorious exclamation of joy, blessing the name of the Triune God for the Kingdom and salvation that He gives us. Through this opening cry we utter a prophetic shout of defiance; we throw down a gauntlet before the feet of the world, offering a ringing challenge to all the dying and deadly values of this age. For the world around us, the earthly land in which we celebrate that Liturgy, is a world of lies. In all our media—the magazines and books we read, the newscasts we watch, the movies we enjoy, the ads that flood our daily grind—the world ceaselessly calls us to bless false gods: the idols of Mammon, Success, Health, Youth, Beauty (as defined by the latest airbrushed models), Fame. From cradle to grave, falsehood bombards us.

Bless Mammon! the world tells us – the financial bottom line is all that matters, so measure your worth by the size of your salaries and your stock portfolios. Money is the means to the good life, which everyone knows consists of good food, good wine, unceasing entertainment, and expensive holidays. Play the lottery. Buy life insurance and extended warranties. Buy low and sell high. Work all you can—even on Sundays. The more of these you cram into your lives, the more contented you will be.

Bless Youth and Beauty! Spend more money on concealing your true age than you spend on the poor. Use skin creams to smooth wrinkles, hair dyes to eliminate your grey hair, Botox injections to keep a youthful face. First of all you must divinize and absolutize a certain image (often of an underaged anorexic, always of someone young), and then strive with all your might to approximate this image yourself—or at least inwardly blame yourself if you cannot. Thus our culture offers all kinds of cosmetic surgeries, breast implants, liposuction, fad diets, diet clubs and support groups, tanning salons, electrolysis. Pursuit of inner beauty is utterly lost in the scramble to conform to the most recently canonized image of an outer beauty which, despite all our efforts, will one day pass away.

In all these cultural distortions, the Church recognizes her rivals, denouncing them as false gods that cannot save. The idolatrous quests for Mammon, Youth, or skin-deep Beauty can ultimately never satisfy the human heart. Our society calls upon us to bless these impotent deities and to affirm them as the ultimate realities. The Church, in the opening words of her Divine Liturgy, offers the only true alternative: instead of these idols, we will bless only the true God, Triune and undivided, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and among all the alternative paths offered us in the world, we will bless and choose only His Kingdom as the

true destination for the human race. And so in the opening benediction we make our cry of defiance. In it, we refuse all other paths and lift up the name of the Trinity alone. And when the celebrant proclaims this truth and this Kingdom, the assembled Church, destined for that Kingdom, responds, "Amen!"

In responding with the amen, we do not merely accept the celebrant's proclamation as true and align ourselves with God and His Kingdom against the false gods of the world. More than that, we also seal what has been said. The celebrant's benediction and prayer, through the amen, now becomes the prayer *of the Church*.

The amen is not superfluous, but essential, revealing the nature and dignity of the lay people in the Church. The celebrant cannot utter the amen to his own prayer, for that is the job of the assembled faithful; without them and their liturgical response, there can be no Liturgy and no Church. This is why the canons do not permit the priest to celebrate the Liturgy without a congregation. The Body of Christ consists of both priest and people and contains a multitude of callings, tasks, and offices. God calls some to serve as deacons. Others He calls to read, some to assist at the altar, some to sing or chant. Others are called to prepare the temple before the Liturgy even begins, still others to offer the liturgical responses led by the choir or cantor. (Like a body whose parts have a multitude of different functions, the Body of the Church has a multitude of functions, and each function is important.) But God calls *all* to function as part of the royal priesthood (see 1 Peter 2:9) and, with the celebrant, to offer the eucharistic sacrifice of praise. Giving the amen reveals the laity as the priest's concelebrants.

Without the liturgical amen of the people, the priest's opening benediction remains no more than his individual pious wish, his devout and private prayer. But when the congregation responds, "Amen," the priest's utterance becomes the opening prayer of the Church, the first note in the Church's song, the first movement of the journey to the Kingdom. The clergy are priests for no other reason than because they express the prayer of the royal priesthood, the Church. The bishop ordains the priest as a presbyter, an elder (Greek *presbyteros*), his official title. The Church also refers to the presbyter as a priest (Greek *iereus*) because he embodies the priesthood of the Church - which in turn embodies the eternal priesthood of Christ, the only true Priest. By uttering this first amen, the laity reveal themselves in all their divine dignity as the priestly people of God.

(From *Let Us Attend: A Journey through the Orthodox Divine Liturgy* by Father Lawrence Farley)

Українська Католицька Парафія Матері Божої Неустаючої Помочі

Церква Святого Пророка й Предтечи Йоана Хрестителя
Святиня Святого Миколая, Ахиєпископа Мір Лікійського, Чудотворця

Ukrainian Catholic Parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Church of the Holy Prophet, Forerunner and Baptizer John
Shrine of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycea

4400 Palm Avenue
La Mesa, CA 91941
Parish Office: (619) 697-5085

Website: stjohnthebaptizer.org

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

Image Not Made by Human Hands

Tradition tells that during the Lord's earthly lifetime, his fame spread to Edessa, beyond the Euphrates River. While Jesus was healing many people in Palestine, Prince Abgar of Edessa was suffering with leprosy and heard of the miracles Christ was working in Palestine. Abgar sent the court artist Ananias to Jerusalem, asking that Christ come and heal him of his leprosy. He instructed him that if the Master would not come that he was to paint His likeness for he believed that that would be enough to heal him. Ananias tried his best to paint a portrait of Jesus, but was unable to capture his likeness. So Jesus took a napkin, and wiped his face with it, impressing his divine countenance on it, leaving a perfect image of His most pure face on it. He gave it to Ananias, sending it with a message back to Prince Abgar. The message was that this napkin would heal him mostly, but that Jesus would send one of his disciples later to complete the healing. Abgar kissed the napkin and his leprosy left him, except for a small spot on his face. Later, the Apostle Thaddaeus came and preached the gospel to him. The prince was completely healed, and was baptized. The prince then smashed the idols at the city gates and placed the Holy Napkin above them, fastened to wood, with a gold frame and ornamented with pearls. He had inscribed above it: "O Christ our God, no one who hopes in You will be put to shame." Many miracles have been worked by this icon. The Holy Napkin remained in Edessa, even after the Arabs conquered it, until the year 944, when it was brought with honor and triumph to Constantinople in the reign of Romanus I, when Theophylact was Ecumenical Patriarch. The Holy Napkin was enshrined in the Church of the most holy Theotokos called the Pharos. This is the translation that is celebrated today.