

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of the Holy Napkin



August 16, 2015

12TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – TONE 3

POSTFEAST OF DORMITION;

TRANSLATION OF THE IMAGE NOT-MADE-BY-HANDS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST FROM EDESSA TO CONSTANTINOPLE; THE HOLY MARTYR DIOMEDES, PHYSICIAN

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF AUGUST 17 – AUGUST 23

PLEASE NOTE: There will be **NO** vespers during the Summer months unless noted in the bulletin.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 23 – 13TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; APODOSIS OF DORMITION; THE HOLY MARTYR LUPUS

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 уважли!*

ON CHRISTIANS

From the Epistle to Diognetus / Written sometime before the 4th century

Christians are not distinguished from other men by *country, language, nor by the customs which they observe*. They do not inhabit cities of their own, use a particular way of speaking,

nor lead an eccentric form of life... They live in their own countries, but they do so as those who are just passing through. As citizens they participate in everything with others, yet they endure everything as if they were foreigners... They marry, like everyone

else, and they have children... They share a common table, but not a common bed. They exist in the flesh, but they do not live by the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, all the while surpassing the laws by their lives. They love all men and are persecuted by all. They are unknown and condemned. They are put to death and restored to life. They are poor, yet

make many rich. They lack everything, yet they overflow in everything. They are dishonored, and yet in their very dishonor they are glorified; they are spoken ill of and yet are justified; they



are reviled but bless; they are insulted and repay the insult with honor; they do good, yet are punished as evildoers; when punished, they rejoice as if raised from the dead. They are assailed by the Jews as barbarians; they are persecuted by the Greeks; yet those who hate them

are unable to give any reason for their hatred. To sum it all up in one word, what the soul is in the body, that is what Christians are in the world. The soul is dispersed through all the parts of the body, and Christians are scattered through all the cities of the world. The soul lives in the body, yet is not of the body; Christians live in the world, yet are not of the world.

NEVER OWNING THE SUNDIAL

From Parish Publishing LLC

Philips Brooks, a noted pastor and author, once told a story of a primitive tribe to whom a sundial had been given. They wanted to honor it and keep it sacred, so they built a small roofed hut to put it in. We should be careful not to smile, for great numbers of civilized people take many of God's gifts and treat them in just the way the tribe did that didn't understand what a sundial was for.

How many there are who take God's gifts, not to use for larger life, but to keep and protect. So they put them in banks and in safe deposit boxes. They house them and build a roof over them. Those primitive people never did own that sundial. It was not something to use and serve with, but something to be kept, to be guarded, to be concerned about. They had, in a measure, to live for it, not by it.

So, too often our gifts from God, our treasures and our talents, never belong to us. We have to keep them, worry about them, care for them, and share them in such a way that others will be drawn to Christ. Nothing really belongs to us until we pass it on to others.

Building Bridges

a tale from long ago...

Once upon a time two brothers who lived on adjoining farms began to quarrel. It was the first time in 40 years that it became so serious. They would always work side by side. They shared machinery. They traded labor and goods as needed without a hitch.

Then it all fell apart. It began with a small misunderstanding and it grew into a major difference. Finally it exploded into an exchange of bitter words. After that there was only silence.

One morning there was a knock on John's door. He opened it to find a man with a carpenter's toolbox. "I'm looking for a couple of days work" he said. "Perhaps you would have a few small jobs here and there that I could help with?"

"Yes," said John, the older brother. "I do have a job for you. Look across the creek at that farm. That's my neighbor, in fact, it's my younger brother, Mark. Last week there was a meadow between us. But he took his bulldozer to the river levee and now there is a creek between us. Well, he may have done this to spite me, but I'll go him one better. See that pile of lumber by the barn? I want you to build me a fence – an 8 foot fence – so I won't need to see his place or face anymore."

The carpenter said, "I think I understand the situation. Show me the nails and the post hole digger and I'll be able to do a job that pleases you." The older brother had to go to town, so he helped the carpenter get the materials ready and then he was off for the day. The carpenter worked hard all that day measuring, sawing, nailing.

About sunset when the farmer returned, the carpenter had just finished his job. The farmer's eyes opened wide, his jaw dropped. There was no fence there at all. It was a bridge – a bridge stretching from one side of the creek to the other! It was a fine piece of work, handrails and all. And the neighbor, his younger brother, was coming across, with his hand outstretched.

"You are quite a brother to build this bridge after all I've said and done."

The two brothers stood at each end of the bridge, and then they met in the middle, taking each other's hand. They turned to see the carpenter hoist his toolbox on his shoulder.

"No, wait! Stay a few days. I've a lot of other projects for you," said the older brother. "I'd love to stay on," the carpenter said, "but, I have many more bridges to build."

THE LITURGICAL YEAR IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

By Fr. Theodore Stylianopoulos

The Liturgy and all the sacraments in the Orthodox Christian Church begin with the prayer:

"Blessed is the kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, always, now and forever".

The aim of all Christian living – praying, studying, working and resting is to bring us before the awesome and renewing reality of the kingdom of God. Although God's kingdom may be described by many words (God's will, rule, power, lordship, majesty, glory and grace), put simply it is God's personal holy presence. To live in the reality of God's kingdom is to live in the presence of God – with a sense of wonder, joy and thanksgiving in all circumstances and for all things.

What is the significance of the liturgical year?

The liturgical year is a way of discipline in prayer, a pattern of worship, an anchor of support for the life of the Church. But it also has deeper significance. The late George Florovsky, an eminent Orthodox theologian of blessed memory, has taught us that worship is a response to the call of God who has already made known His redeeming love to us through decisive events culminating in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ. Worship has two major aspects: remembrance (anamnesis which means not only historical remembrance but also reliving the events commemorated)

and thanksgiving (including praise and doxology).

Thus the liturgical year, by bringing unceasingly before us God's mighty deeds of salvation and the reality of God's kingdom in our midst, is the sanctification of time and thereby the true fulfillment of both personal and corporate aspects of our lives as Christians. Far from being simply a calendar, the liturgical year in the life of the Church – the life of Christians living in community as brothers and sisters – in awareness of God's kingdom, remembering the entire communion of Prophets, Apostles, Saints and all of God's people on earth and in heaven, being renewed by God's saving love, helping one another, witnessing to Christ's good news, and waiting for the fullness of the coming kingdom according to God's timing.

"If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord" (Rom. 14:8)

Orthodox worship proclaims the centrality of Christ. The liturgical year celebrates the presence of the mystery of Christ in the life of the Church and seeks to make the living Christ a renewing life-source for every Orthodox Christian.

Do not the most important feasts of the year celebrate the good news of the life and work of Christ, the Annunciation, His Birth, Presentation in the Temple, Baptism, Transfiguration, Triumphal Entry, Passion Week, Easter, Ascension and His gift of

the Spirit on Pentecost day, all of which are based on the New Testament? Do we not remember and relive His death and resurrection on each Sunday (Kyriake, that is, the Lord's Day) and in each Liturgy? Do we not continuously hear about Jesus' teachings, miracles and encounters with men and women from all walks of life? Even the Feastdays of the Prophets, the Apostles, the Theotokos and the Saints, properly understood, point to the centrality of Christ, the Saviour and Lord of all.

This is the essential message of the Orthodox faith: Christ lives and desires to be one with us in a union of holy love. He is the Leader of our life and the Celebrant of the sacraments. He is the Good Shepherd who continues not only to seek out the lost but also to feed those who are already in His flock. Are we prepared to hear His call? Are we willing to open our hearts to Him? Do we seek Him as eagerly as He seeks us? I would like to end this preface with the image of Christ the Pursuer from the conclusion of St. John Chrysostom's 15th Homily on 1 Timothy, a passage to which George Florovsky has pointed. In the final part of this Homily, St. John Chrysostom meditates on Christ's love for us and exhorts Christians to glorify Christ for His countless

material and spiritual gifts – the same Christ that we often neglect and perhaps even secretly dislike for pursuing us and seeking to change our lives. Then St. John has Christ speaking to us in these words:

"But what shall I say? It is not in this way only that I have shown my love to you, but also by what I have suffered. For you I was spit upon, I was scourged. I emptied myself of glory, I left my Father and came to you, who hate me, and turn from me, and are loath to hear my name. I pursued you, I ran after you, that I might overtake you. I united and joined you to myself, "eat me, drink me," I said. In heaven above I hold you, and on earth below I embrace you. Is it not enough for you that I have your pledge of salvation in heaven? Does this not satisfy your desire? I again descended on earth (through the Eucharist): I not only am mingled with you, I am entwined in you. I am eaten, broken into tiny particles, that the fusion, intermingling, and union may be more complete. Things united remain yet (sometimes) in their own limits, but I am interwoven with you. I would have nothing separating us. I will that we both be one".

ON THE BENEFITS OF ATTENDING THE LITURGY

St. Maximos the Confessor

It is necessary for every Christian to spend time in the holy church of God, and never to miss the celebration of the Divine Liturgy – for here, the holy angels have custody – they register the people going in each time and offer their angelic intercessions on their behalf. Each person who is found present at the Divine Liturgy, the grace of the Holy Spirit transforms, remolds, and truly remodels into a more divine image, conforming to Himself.

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.

12 REASONS I DON'T GO TO SPORTING EVENTS ANYMORE

1. The coach never came to visit me.
1. Every time I went, they asked me for money.
2. The people sitting in my row didn't seem very friendly.
3. The seats were very hard.
4. The referees made a decision I didn't agree with.
5. I was sitting with hypocrites—they only came to see what others were wearing!
6. Some games went into overtime and I was late getting home.
7. The band played some songs I had never heard before.
8. The games are scheduled on my only day to sleep in and run errands.
9. My parents took me to too many games when I was growing up.
10. Since I read a book on sports, I feel that I know more than the coaches, anyway.
11. I don't want to take my children because I want them to choose for themselves what sport they like best.

Do these reasons sound familiar?

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.

GOD'S EXTENDED HAND

FOCUS (Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve) has provided us with a special bin for collecting donations of clothing, toiletries, etc. to be distributed at GEH. It is located near the door of the church hall.

A Prayer for Vision

Disturb us, Lord, when we are too well pleased with ourselves; when our dreams have come true because we have dreamed too little; when we arrived safely because we have sailed too close to shore. Disturb us, Lord, when with the abundance of the things we possess, we have lost our thirst for the water of life. Stir us, Lord, to dare more boldly, to venture on wider seas, where storms will show your mastery; where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars. We ask you to push back the horizons of our hopes and to push us into the future in strength, courage, hope and love. Amen.



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Heirs of God

Whosoever fears God and keeps His commandments, is the servant of God. And in this service is not perfection, but the righteousness which leads to adoption. For this cause the prophets also and the apostles, the holy band whom God chose, entrusting to them the apostolic preaching, by the goodness of God the Father became prisoners in Christ Jesus. For Paul says, "Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle" (Eph 3: 1; Rom 1: 1): so that the written law works with us in a good servitude, until we are able to master every passion, and to become perfect in the good ministry of virtue through this apostolic state.

For if a man draws near to grace, then Jesus will say to him, "I will no longer call you servants, but I will call you my friends and my brothers: for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you" (Jn 15: 15). For those who have drawn near, and have been taught by the Holy Spirit, have known themselves according to their intellectual substance. And in their knowledge of themselves they have cried out and said, "For we

have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom 8: 15): that we may know what God has given us – "If we are sons, then are we heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with the saints" (Rom 8: 17).

My dear brothers and sisters, and joint heirs with the saints, not foreign to you are all the virtues, but they are yours, if you are not under guilt from this fleshly life, but are manifest before God. For the Spirit enters not the soul of one whose heart is defiled, nor the body that sins; a holy power it is, removed from all deceit.

Truly, my beloved, I write to you as to reasonable people, who have been able to know yourselves. For he who knows himself, knows God: and he who knows God, is worthy to worship Him as is right.

St. Cyril of Alexandria

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