

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
TWELFTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW



Icon of the Deposition of the Zone (Belt) of the Virgin Mary -- August 31st



August 31, 2014

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*THE HOLY HIEROMARTYR EUTYCHES, DISCIPLE OF ST. JOHN THE THEOLOGIAN;
PIDHORETS'K ICON OF THE MOTHER OF GOD (1772)*

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

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

6:00 PM – GREAT VESPERS

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7 – *TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; PREFEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS.
THE HOLY MARTYR SOZON; ZHYROVYTSI ICON OF THE MOTHER OF GOD; PASSING
INTO ETERNAL LIFE OF PATRIARCH JOSYF SLIPIY, 1984*

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!*

GET BUSY LIVING

“Pope Francis brings a new note to this proclamation of the Gospel: joy. He has famously written that one who speaks of Christ to others should not look like someone who has just returned from a funeral. Joy is a sign of the presence of the risen Christ, the Christ we proclaim in various ways, judging always how to present Christ so that people have a chance of hearing and obeying him.”

“Joy cannot be found in falsehood. A Jesus of our own invention cannot save. The true Jesus has risen from the dead. Free from all limitations, he acts now through the sacraments of the church. This is the connection between evangelization and Eucharist. We preach a Eucharistic Christ.”

“The Gospel is not simply a “message.” It is a presence, a presence that attracts and invites and brings us into union with God. Evangelization therefore begins with prayer, both personal and communal. From prayer, the evangelizer, united with Christ and his church, moves into the streets and spaces

that need to be redeemed, contacting those whom Christ loves and waits for.”

“The going out will be tough. We live with those who actively resist conversion, who are part of an ‘anti-evangelizing campaign.’ Pope St. John Paul II wrote... ‘If in fact, on the one hand, the Gospel and evangelization are present in this world, on the other, there is also present a powerful antievangelization that is well organized and has the means to vigorously oppose the Gospel and evangelization.’ Alone, each of us will be overcome by the distractions and opposition of the day. Together, as Christ’s church, gathered into parish and other communities, we will be effective in offering human hospitality in the name of Christ. This will, we pray, eventually result in eucharistic hospitality, full communion in the faith that unites us to our eucharistic Lord.”

Francis Cardinal George

THE BENEFITS OF IGNORANCE

Of course, I have to begin this post with the acknowledgement that I am an ignorant man.

Having gotten that out of the way, I want to spend just a few moments on the benefits of ignorance. Several years ago I was blessed to have a conversation with Fr. Thomas Hopko while we waited in line to greet the new Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church in America. Fr. Thomas is the retired Professor of Dogmatic Theology at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, NY. He has taught a generation of priests.

Our conversation turned to writing. My comment came from my reflection on the experience of writing this blog. I noted that the more I write, the less I seem to know. Part of this realization flows from the fact that I try to restrict my writing to those topics of which I have some knowledge (experience). His smiling response came immediately: "Someday you won't know anything and then you'll be holy!"

It was not entirely spoken in jest. There are many forms of knowledge – or many kinds of knowing which our limited language describes as "knowledge." For Christians the most dangerous form of knowledge is that which we simply acquire through reading and study. It is largely just information. Of course, if you have enough information you can manage the illusion of actual knowledge.

I know a lot of numbers, but I am not a mathematician. I have met mathematicians. Most of what they know is not about numbers – strangely.

There is no great sin in ignorance – or at least there is far less sin in ignorance than in knowledge. The simple truth is that we will not know anything of value until we first know that we do not know. In the competitive world of American Christianity, this is hard. It is not hard for ignorant people to argue – but it is very hard to argue while at the same time admitting that you are ignorant.

This ignorant man has spent a lot of years acquiring "knowledge" (falsely so-called). Knowledge of the sort that is readily available is not at all the same thing as knowing God – the only knowledge that has worth (though every true form of knowledge flows from that single knowledge). Somewhere in the course of my life I came to the place of spiritual exhaustion – I wanted to know God badly enough that I didn't want to know something else in His place. So I became an ignorant man.

Today I know very few things. And though I write almost every day – if you go back and read what I have written you will see that I know very little. I say many of the same things to different questions, for they are the answers I know.

Thus when I wrote a while back that I had never seen a case of righteous anger – I did not mean to say there was no such thing, only that I've not seen it in 57 years of life. I have seen anger that would seem well justified (the anger a husband has over the senseless murder of his wife). But I have seen the same anger kill the man who bore it.

I was born into an angry world. "Jim Crow" South was full of anger. Whites were angry at Blacks and Blacks were angry at Whites. We were angry at Communism. We were angry about the Civil War. We were angry at poverty (especially our own). Others were angry at those who were angry and the injustice of the entire system.

I remember an Abbot, a friend now deceased, who said that after the Vietnam War many young people came to the monastery – "They were so angry about peace," he observed.

I served as an Anglican priest while the Episcopal Church inexorably jettisoned its traditional doctrine. I was consumed with anger. My anger did not save that Church and did me (and likely many others) great harm.

It is not just anger that works in such a fashion. Any of the passions could be chosen. An ignorant man is frequently on the losing end of battles with the passions. It is therefore important for an ignorant man to be aware of his ignorance. Can such an ignorant man argue theology? Not to any benefit.

The great good news is that Christ came to save ignorant men. We are easier to save if we admit our ignorance up front. Our opinions are so much dead weight. I know very little of God. I know that He is good – beyond any grasp of my knowing. I know that He loves in the unfathomable measure of the good God entering Hell in order to bring us out.

I have been in several versions of hell and rescued numerous times. Ignorant men are always getting themselves into stupid, dark places.

That God is good, that He loves us without measure, that He will go to any lengths to rescue us – I know a little about these things, though even of these things I am mostly ignorant. But I will not tire of speaking this good news. Ignorant men everywhere may be glad to hear it.

HEMMED IN BY GLORY

by Fr. Patrick Henry Reardon

<http://preachersinstitute.com/2014/08/24/hemmed-in-by-glory/>

I wonder how many of us have considered what is implied by the juxtaposition of two biblical verses that are, I concede, juxtaposed but rarely. The first verse, from Isaiah, contains the angelic declaration,

“Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.”

The second verse, from Job, contains the Tempter’s answer to the Lord’s question,

“Where have you been lately?”

He responds,

“Walking on the earth, to and fro, up and down.”

Now this is the Tempter’s dilemma: He is hemmed in—above and below—by the glory of God, and he can’t stand the sight of it. It prevents his getting any rest. Our Authority on the subject remarked of Satan,

“He walks through dry places seeking rest and finding none” (Matthew 12:43).

Places on the earth are “dry” to Satan for the very reason that they are full of God’s glory. Created nature, because it bears the beauty of holiness, is not congenial to demonic rest. Satan fell from grace, the ancients tell us, before this world was made, and he has never had a high regard for it.

The only places where the Tempter can find something resembling rest is in the sullied human conscience. Polluted souls are ugly and perverse, so they do afford him something analogous to quiet and repose. A compromised and unrepentant soul is the only abode in which a demon can relax and feel at home. In the absence of a rebellious human being, the devils sometimes settle for a herd of pigs (cf. 8:31). They must recognize some measure of resemblance to the pollution of sin.

Meanwhile, the Tempter, in order to avoid the burden of walking up-and-down, to-and-fro on an earth—and under a sky—full of the glory of God, endeavors to create those situations and circumstances most likely to facilitate the things he favors, such as lust, hatred, cruelty, violence, and despair. Over the centuries, for example, he has learned the value of war in this respect; hardly anything produces as much raw ugliness as a war.

The Scriptures are pretty clear that demonic forces strive to find rest from the weariness of facing God’s glory. This may be the reason they are partial to the bleak, barren terrain of the deserts. Imagine their annoyance, then, when Jesus and the saints invade the desert to fast and pray. The desert becomes a place of holiness and beauty. At that point demonic existence becomes well nigh insupportable.

This is, one suspects, the reason temptations in the desert sometimes take on the quality of desperation.

Once again, our Authority on the subject of demons warns that they have been known to return to dwellings whence they were driven out. The Tempter, having wandered for a spell in dry places, resolves to re-take his former abode:

“I will return to my house from which I came.”

And what does he find?

“He finds it empty, swept, and put in order.”

Perhaps the most important adjective in this description is “empty.” That abode was once purged, but now no one really lives there, and certainly no one is guarding the place. So the Tempter, having returned, resolves to fortify his position this time:

“He goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there.”

Since, in Holy Scripture, the number seven symbolizes plenitude, this reference to “seven demons” should give us pause about the “last state” of that soul. Our Authority on demons does not say,

“The soul is worse-off than it was before.”

He says, rather, that that soul’s “last state” (ta eschata) is worse. He appears to warn us here of apostasy and damnation. That is to say, the soul most at risk in this world is the one to whom the demons, once driven out, have returned.

This parable is about more than individual salvation-or-damnation, however, because it explicitly refers to history and geography:

“So shall it also be with this wicked generation” (12:44-45).

Perhaps this is the most frightening consideration of all; the parable holds out the prospect of a nation, a culture, or an entire people succumbing to final infidelity. Some centuries earlier, the Gospel had been preached in that place and among that people. The demons had been driven out; the area and its culture were swept and put in order. Sadly, however, at a later point in its history—“this wicked generation”—the demons find the place empty of all evangelical influence.

Long lost are its inoculations against evil. Careless routine has replaced careful repentance, and the returning invader arrives to write the latter pages of its history.



HOW ENLIGHTENED ARE YOU?

IF...

If you can live without caffeine,

If you can be cheerful, ignoring aches and pains,

If you can resist complaining,

If you can understand when your loved ones are too busy to give you any time,

If you can take criticism and blame without resentment,

If you can ignore a friend's limited education and never correct him or her,

If you can resist treating a rich friend better than a poor friend,

If you can face the world without lies and deceit,

If you can conquer tension without medical help,

If you can relax without liquor,

If you can sleep without the aid of drugs,

If you can honestly say that deep in your heart you have no prejudice against creed, color, religion, gender preference, or politics,

--Then you have almost reached the same level of spiritual development as your dog!

THE CHURCH NEW YEAR –SEPTEMBER 1ST

Every time we enter upon another year whether it be civil or ecclesiastical we have the opportunity to reflect upon the past and make changes for a better future. Let us ask ourselves: What practical changes can I make which will allow the Lord to act more in my life?

Can I do more in my spiritual life – prayer, study, almsgiving, stewardship? Can we do more as a community – outreach, charity, evangelism? How can I personally and we collectively play a part in making this coming year better than the previous year?

"I wish it need not have happened in my time," said Frodo.

"So do I," said Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us."

*The Fellowship of the Ring
J.R.R. Tolkien*

"Men do not differ much about what things they will call evils; they differ enormously about what evils they will call excusable."

*G.K. Chesterton
ILN, 10/23/09*

"These are the days when the Christian is expected to praise every creed except his own."

*G.K. Chesterton
ILN 8/11/28*

Going to the Hospital?

Please let your priest know, so that he can add you to the prayer list, or, if you like, pay you a visit. If you know someone else is in the hospital please let Fr. James know.

Did You Know We're on Facebook?

"Like" us to receive our posts, and so that your friends can get to know your church a little. Who knows who else may "Like" us too? <https://www.facebook.com/pages/St-John-the-Baptizer-Ukrainian-Catholic-Church/137098752989860>

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.

Learn to work with a spirit of sacrifice. For surely there will come a time when it will be necessary to give up everything, and become martyrs for our sacred faith, and perhaps to offer one's life in sacrifice for the good of the Church and Nation.

Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky

Meaning of Personal Witness:

In the present world how can I bear witness in word (effectively, according to the circumstances) and through my example of a Christian life (according to the precepts of the Gospel)?

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.

Share 2014

We do not doubt the Resurrection of Christ, His gift of salvation to us all. How are we prepared to reciprocate for this most wondrous of gifts? Let us help our eparchy bring Christ's salvation to others by making a contribution to **Share 2014 – Annual Eparchial Appeal**.

Ми не сумніваємося у Воскресінні Христа і Його дару для нашого спасіння. Як ми готові віддячити Йому за цей найчудовіший із всіх дарів? То ж допоможемо нашій єпархії принести Христове спасіння до інших внесок в **Share 2014 – Єпархіальний Заклик**.

Goal:
\$120000

2014

Stewardship Pledges

Pledges received: 18

Pledges:
\$39116

It is impossible to plan any sort of budget until all pledge forms are turned in. If you haven't returned your pledge, please do so.

Pastor:

Fr. James Bankston: (619) 905-5278

Pastoral Council:

Fr. Deacon Frank Avant: (760) 805-1667

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Mark Hartman: (619) 446-6357

Luke Miller: (858) 354-2008

Jeanine Soucie: (718) 674-4529

Social Committee Chairpersons:

Vacant: Please consider volunteering as chairperson.

Finance Committee:

Bohdan Knianicky: (619) 303-9698

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**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква
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More Will Be Given

They justly, therefore, enter into the kingdom of heaven who have denied themselves according to the Lord's Word and have loved the Lord alone with their whole heart. Because of their great love they will be recompensed with the greatest of heavenly gifts. For in the afflictions, crucifixions, patience, and faith are hidden the promises, the glory, the possession of heavenly good things just as in the seed that is thrown into the earth the fruit lies already hidden or in the tree that is covered with thorns and grows amid vile and dirty dung.

Then they will reveal that in them were the dignity and glory and manifold fruit as the Apostle says: "Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Acts 14: 22). And the Lord says:

"In your patience you will possess your souls" (Lk 21: 19), and again: "In the world you will have tribulation" (Jn 16: 33).

For there is need of effort and patience, restraint and every kind of watchfulness, of alacrity and perseverance in prayer to the Lord so that one can rise above earthly desires and the snares and traps of sense pleasures, above the enticements of the world, and avoid the attacks of evil spirits. One needs to know well by what vigilance and attentive faith and love the saints possess the heavenly treasure, that is, the power of the Spirit in their souls and in heaven, which is the balm of the kingdom.

Pseudo-Macarius