

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



*Icon of the Nativity of the Theotokos, the Mother of God -- September 8th*



# September 6, 2015

## 15<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – TONE 6

COMMEMORATION OF THE MIRACLE PERFORMED BY THE ARCHANGEL MICHAEL AT COLOSSAE, WHICH IS ALSO KNOWN AS CHONAE; THE HOLY MARTYR EUDOXIUS AND HIS COMPANIONS; OUR VENERABLE FATHER ARCHIPPUS

### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 7 – SEPTEMBER 13

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

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

6:00 PM – GREAT VESPERS FOR NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS (SATISFIES OBLIGATION)

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8 – NATIVITY OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS (OBLIGATORY FEAST)

9:30 AM – DIVINE LITURGY

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13 – SUNDAY BEFORE THE EXALTATION OF THE CROSS

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!*

#### September Birthdays

Emma Hirniak	–	September 4
Maria Hughes	–	September 13
Brandon Avant	–	September 17
John Heltsley	–	September 25

#### *Cards for sale*

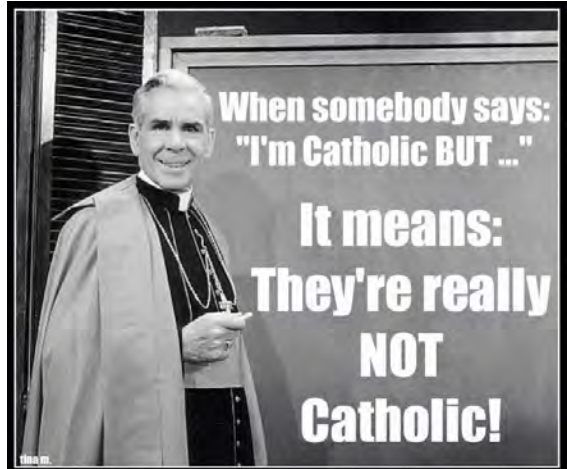
Various Greeting Cards are available for sale in the church hall following each Divine Liturgy. See Mary Kitt to purchase.

#### **Last Sunday's Bulletin**

If you haven't yet picked up last Sunday's bulletin, it is available in the church hall, or on our website, [stjohnthebaptizer.org](http://stjohnthebaptizer.org).

#### **Going to the Hospital?**

Please let your Father James 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.



*If the demons see us rejoicing in the Lord, contemplating the bliss of the future, mindful of the Lord, deeming all things in His hand, and that no evil spirit has any strength against the Christian, nor any power at all over any one – when they behold the soul fortified with these thoughts – they are doscomfited and turned backwards.*

– St. Anthony of the Desert

## THE TRAGEDY OF THE MALFORMED CONSCIENCE

*Michael Liccione*

The recent release of those ghoulish Planned Parenthood videos, in which doctors and other officials openly hawk fetal body parts, has some people asking what happened to the consciences of the people engaged in such barbarity. The easy answer is that their consciences have been dulled by willing participation in the evil of abortion. And that's true as far as it goes. But it raises further questions: If they sincerely don't believe that abortion is evil, how can they be held culpable for participating in it? After all, they're just following their consciences; aren't we all supposed to follow our conscience?

Of course we are, says the Church. Lest we forget it, we have even Nancy Pelosi to remind us. Citing the primacy of conscience is the educated Catholic's favorite way of exonerating herself and being proud of it. But the Church also reminds us of the duty to form our consciences well. That means, among other things, that we must acknowledge the objective force of the divine and natural law. The precepts and norms of that law bind us morally not because we invent them, **or acknowledge them, or choose to bind ourselves by them.** They bind us because they prescribe the forms and limits of rational behavior, given the kind of creature we are and irrespective of our actual choices, so that we ought to see ourselves as bound by them. A well-formed conscience is the product of sincere effort to learn those norms and precepts and a free decision to live by them.

Admittedly, most of us fail at that in some-or-other respect. We fail through ignorance, confusion, sloth, or willful rationalization. That sometimes generates a paradox: When a person's conscience is malformed, it can easily happen that their doing one thing which is morally obligatory—following their conscience—consists in doing something else which, objectively speaking, is morally forbidden even though they don't know it. Thus and at one level, the tragedy of the malformed conscience is that it's so easy to do a wrong thing by doing a right thing—like the millions of Germans who accommodated, even

**fostered, the barbarities of Nazism because they were honestly striving, in conscience, to be “good Germans.”** Or today, like Pelosi and all those other Catholics in public life who have no problem with supporting abortion as a conscientious “choice” for women in difficulty. And if you're not absolutely opposed to killing children about to be born, of course you're not going to have a problem with using the cadavers to benefit medical research.

But there's an even deeper level to the tragedy of the malformed conscience. By putting its subject in the position of doing wrong by doing right, a **malformed conscience makes it impossible for that person to right himself.** If my conscience sincerely tells me to do A, when A is in fact an objectively grave evil, then if I refrain from doing A, as I ought, I violate my conscience. That would also be an objectively (and subjectively) grave evil. Such a dilemma is impossible for such a person to avoid on his own. And to the extent he is enmeshed by it in practice, he becomes still more corrupt, because acting according to such a conscience readily becomes habitual. The only way out of such a tragic dilemma is the divine grace that prompts some sinners to a radical metanoia or conversion of heart.

A grand-scale example is what happened to the leading Nazis when Germany lost the war. The regime's three main leaders—Hitler, Goering, and Goebbels—all committed suicide. They knew there was no other way to escape the alternatives of living like hunted animals, on the one hand, or imprisonment and execution on the other; and their pride would permit them neither alternative. At Nuremberg soon thereafter, the Allies tried other leading Nazis in an international court for war crimes. The evidence of those crimes was clear enough; what's important here is the principle by which the perpetrators were judged culpable. **They were judged not by any national or even international statute, but by a “higher law” (sometimes called “the natural law”) by which merely human enactments, such as those of Hitler's regime, must themselves be judged.** Enactments and mandates which violate



that law are illegitimate; as St. Thomas Aquinas put it, a human law which violates the divine and natural law is “no law at all.” At the dawn of the civil-rights movement in the 1950s, **Martin Luther King appealed to the same insight**. But that wasn’t the only reason the Nazis being tried were convicted.

Some have thought that trying the Nazis under such a law was itself unjust. Those men were, after all and as they said, “only following orders,” and those orders had been given by a popularly elected government. If that’s the only sort of law by which one sees oneself bound in conscience, then it seems unjust to hold one culpable for following it. How can it be just to blame people for following their conscience? Moreover, this whole “natural-law” business—especially if it’s called the “divine” as well as the natural law—was philosophically controversial even in America and Britain, where the alternative jurisprudence of “legal positivism” had developed a foothold that seems almost unshakeable today. Isn’t it arbitrary to judge people according to a moral and legal theory that is by no means universally accepted?

The proper response to that objection is this: The applicable precepts of the natural law are ones that, in the phrase of Catholic philosopher J. Budziszewski, we can’t not know. Taking the example at hand, **we can’t not know that genocide is profoundly immoral, even if many can’t articulate exactly why**. I don’t think that’s terribly controversial; to pretend otherwise is corrupt. But if there are moral norms we can’t not know, then we are culpable for choosing to act as though we don’t know they bind us. That’s the conviction which animated the best among those who prosecuted the Nazis at Nuremberg. They rejected the defense: “We were only following orders” because those following the orders were culpable for not knowing those orders were wrong and ought to be disobeyed.

On a slightly lesser scale, that’s the deeper tragedy of the **malformed conscience among those Americans who have a hard time seeing what the fuss about abortion** and Planned Parenthood is about. At this point we can’t not know that a late-term “fetus” is an innocent

human being, and we can’t not know that the direct, intentional killing of an innocent human being is gravely immoral if anything is. Instead, many pretend that such a fetus is an innocent human being only if her/his mother chooses so to regard it. That is absurd. Others argue that, even granted such creatures are innocent human beings, sometimes their lives must be deliberately sacrificed so as to spare the mother the difficulties that would otherwise ensue. Haven’t we supposedly evolved beyond human sacrifice? But there are many who, for reasons of their own, have managed to suppress that knowledge, so that they are genuinely unaware they possess it.

I would also argue that on other, less gruesome topics, this is **a major problem among American Catholics today**. As Catholics we can’t not know that persons are to be loved, not used, but much of our behavior in sexual and/or economic matters seems to consist of using people in apparently good conscience rather than loving them. That is culpable malformation of conscience. And it presents what I believe is the major pastoral problem for the Church throughout the world today.

Well-formed Catholics know that, according to Church teaching, “[f]or a sin to be mortal, three conditions must together be met: “Mortal sin is sin whose object is grave matter and which is also committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent” {CCC §1857}. Obviously, if one freely does something whose object is grave matter, but one never knew it’s grave matter, one lacks “full knowledge” and thus is not guilty of mortal sin. But what if one’s lack of full knowledge is itself culpable, and thus fails to exonerate one of mortal sin? If one has already chosen, for whatever reason, to suppress one’s knowledge of what one can’t not know, that is by no means a far-fetched possibility. In fact, I am certain it is sometimes the case.

I believe that pastors and confessors at every level of the Church need to take account of that. So far I see little evidence that they do. And we are reaping the fruits. Many tragedies of malformed consciences go unrecognized and therefore uncorrected by the grace available through the Church.

## ***YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIKE YOUR PRIEST***

*By Fr. Anthony Perkins*

*A reader recommended Brother Patrick Mary Briscoe's article "You Don't have to Like Your priest" (published on March 7, 2014 at Dominicana) It is an excellent article and I recommend it, too. Imitation is the highest form of flattery. The following is patterned on Brother Patrick's essay. Why do I like it? I know that my parishioners struggle with this; not only have they benefitted from the service of saintly priests, their own priest is often hard to love. While I try to be a bit more likable, I will never please or satisfy everyone. Surely part of the solution has to involve more realistic expectations and a greater appreciation for the priesthood, the fallibility of the men who serve as priests, and the love these men have (and sacrifices they make) for the people they serve.*

*– Fr. Anthony*

There are many reasons for you not to like your priest. It may be because his homilies are too dry, lack patristic moorings, or stray too far from the Biblical text. His answers to your deepest theological, spiritual, and personal challenges may leave you cold and unsatisfied. He may be a poor confessor, offering only absolution and standard responses about "prayer rules", "forgiveness" and "humility". He may not offer the kind of charismatic and visionary leadership that would inspire your parish to grow. He may chant out of tune, his accent may be too strong, or he might try to sing all his liturgical parts fortissimo – espansimo. He may be too ignorant, over-educated, emotional, impersonal, shy, gregarious, fundamentalist, liberal, political, or dull. Whatever his human failings, there is sure to be plenty about him you do not like. **And that's okay: you don't have to like your priest.**

Orthodox Christians often feel guilty or dissatisfied if they are unable to feel good about their their priest. They have memories of priests who were great liturgists, pastors, leaders, confessors, teachers, and managers. The Orthodox are reared on stories of startsi (great elders) and sainted priests that, along with the hagiographic memories of former priests, set the bar of competency impossibly high. And yet, there is something within the heart of the Orthodox Christian that still wants to be close to his parish priest – despite all his very real shortcomings. This desire for a meaningful connection shows that there is more to the relationship between priest and parishioner than

meets the eye.

This relationship is different from all the other ones we know. The priest is not the commanding officer of a military unit or the manager of a parish franchise or even the professor of a class everyone has to pass in order to receive their reward. He isn't a lawyer trying to get people in good with the judge so he will excuse them of their crimes. He isn't an entertainer the parish has hired to make everyone feel better every Sunday morning or a museum curator responsible for preserving ancestral stories, cultures, and languages. He is not a psychiatrist or family counselor that can solve everyone's personal problems. Nor has he been assigned to the parish to be anyone's friend. He may or may not exhibit bits of each of these, but they do not capture who he is or how his parishioners should relate to him.

### **So how should the Orthodox Christian relate to his priest?**

Chapter Seven of Fr. David's book (from Ancient Faith Publishing) uses the models of Lawyer, Doctor, Teacher, Artist, and Manager to help parishioners understand their relationship with their priest.

The priest is a shepherd. Some lead their sheep with gentle and melodious coaxing, others drag them through the brambles by the scruff of the neck. Some take on the wolves with the ferocity of a warrior, others focus on keeping the sheep in a guarded pasture and cower at every hint of a howl. No matter how he tends them, one thing is constant: the shepherd loves his sheep. He doesn't

judge them or mistreat them; he cares for them. Some parishioners may be offended at the idea of being “sheep” or “sheeple”, and admittedly the analogy is not perfect. But it is still powerful; after all, it is the one Christ Himself used (St. John 10). And this analogy says as much if not more about the qualities of the shepherd as it does those of the sheep. Being a shepherd means putting the well-being of the sheep first, even to the point of laying down his life for them (St. John 10:15). Being a priest rarely involves actual crucifixion, but the priesthood does bring the the modern spiritual and physical equivalents of the kind of nomadic life that is easy to romanticize but difficult to live. Trusting the priest as the sheep do their shepherd may go against deeply-seated American values like egalitarianism and democracy, but it really is part of our relationship with Christ and His Church. **This is a dangerous world; everyone needs to be under the protection of a good shepherd.**

The priest is a physician. The Church is a hospital that Christ created for those who are sick, and the priest administers the strongest medicine of healing and salvation. The good doctor does not judge his patients; does not treat them like employees or marks; nor is he inconvenienced by their complaints or offended by their diseases. The good doctor does not care for people to receive a paycheck or good benefits, but because he genuinely desires that they be well. The good doctor treats the whole person, helping them make better life-style choices and prescribing medicines and disciplines that will allow them to live life in abundance. A good patient takes his health seriously and works openly, honestly, and earnestly with his physician. He takes his prescriptions seriously and communicates his improvements and setbacks so that his treatment will be effective. **This world is full of disease, everyone needs to be under the care of a good physician.**

Finally, priests are fathers. This one used to be obvious and easy for people to accept. That is no longer true. Most people have been affected, either directly or indirectly, by divorce, dead-beat dads, and abusive and unreliable male “role-models”. We should not be surprised that

many people bring the damage such a history has wrought in their lives with them as they encounter priests, Christ, and the Church. It is rare to meet a person who has a completely healthy intuition about what it means to be a father to a child or child to a father. This makes it very difficult for them to have a healthy relationship with their priest. For some, this is compounded by the modern idea that the male priesthood offends the dignity of women. These two lenses distort the image of priest as the father of the parish. In order to heal this, the priest must be reliable and loving; and the parishioner must re-learn what a father is. The father helps give life, then he nurtures, guides, and protects it. This is the fundamental role of the priest; not chores or discipline (although these may come into play), but to enliven and strengthen. **Our Lord loves us too much to leave us as orphans; everyone needs a father.**

In the end, we don’t have to like our priest much at all; our relationship with him is not about our emotions or satisfying our preferences. Our connection with him is different from the one you share with anyone else. Even if you find your priest a bore or a jerk, he is your shepherd, your physician, and your father who has, in imitation of Christ, offered His life so that you might be saved. When you are feeling disappointed or unfulfilled because of your priest’s unaffability, it may help to remember the difficulty of his calling and that he is as human as anyone else.

As Brother Patrick Mary Briscoe put it;

***Priests aren’t ordained because they are perfectly qualified or worthy or, in any simply natural way, deserving of the privilege of ministry; they are ordained because God has chosen to care for His people by means of frail human beings. And whether we like them or not, their frailty is a welcome reminder that God’s ways are not our ways, nor are His thoughts our thoughts (Isa 55:8). The One who redeemed the world by the foolishness of the cross continues to draw a people to himself through faulty instruments – instruments like you and me.***

**Amen, Brother!**

There was a problem printing our eparchial newspaper, New Star for September. Somehow the Ukrainian-language section was mistakenly repeated from the August issue. The printer will redo page 1 (with mailing information) and two, along with replacing pages 11 through 19, and page 20. Pages 3-10 will not be redone.

The cost of replacing the misprinted issues will not be borne by New Star or St Nicholas Eparchy.

You will receive two copies this month. One will contain the English section and last month's Ukrainian part. The second copy will not repeat the English section, and present only the correct Ukrainian-language material. Thank you for your support, the persons responsible apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

### WISDOM OF THE FATHERS

*Many rich and powerful men would pay dearly to see the Lord or His Most Pure Mother, but God does not appear in riches, but in the humble heart... Every one of the poorest men can be humbled and come to know God. It needs neither money nor reputation to come to know God, but only humility.*

*St. Silouan the Athonite, Writings, I.11,21*

### Sunday offering for August 30

Amount	Number
\$10.00	1
\$20.00	2
\$25.00	1
\$40.00	3
\$50.00	3
\$85.00	1
<u>\$600.00</u>	<u>2</u>
\$1030.00	

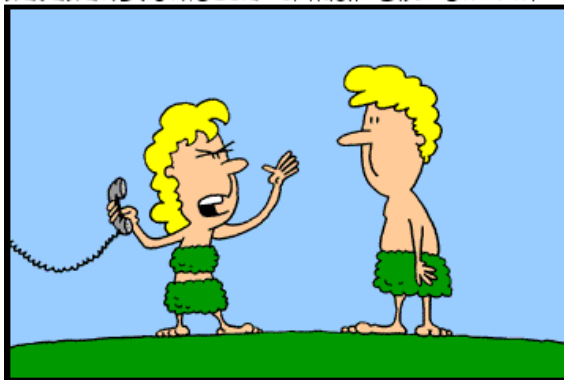
Parishioner Total: \$1030.00

Average / parish household (42): \$12.41

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2200.00

**Deficit: (\$1095.00)**

**Year-to-date deficit: (\$35469.00)**



Thanks to Dad Hengeveld

07-17-1998

**FIRST THORNS, THEN PAINFUL  
CHILDBIRTH, AND NOW THESE INCESSANT  
PHONE CALLS ASKING US TO SWITCH OUR  
LONG DISTANCE CARRIERS**

### Social Media Explained

Twitter - I'm eating a #donut

Facebook - I like donuts

Foursquare - This is where I eat donuts

Instagram - Here is a photo of my donut

YouTube - Here I am eating a donut

LinkedIn - My skills include donut eating

Pinterest - here is a donut recipe

Spotify - Now listening to "donuts"

G+ - I'm a google employee who eats donuts

#### 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 Chair:

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#### Finance Committee:

Bohdan Knianicky: (619) 303-9698





**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква  
Святого Йоана Хрестителя  
St. John the Baptizer  
Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church**

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**Website:** [stjohnthebaptizer.org](http://stjohnthebaptizer.org)

**Pastor:** Fr. James Bankston  
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Fr. James' cell phone: (619) 905-5278

***Treasury and Treasurer***

Mary alone forms the boundary between created and uncreated nature, and no one can come to God except through her and the Mediator born of her, and none of God's gifts can be bestowed on angels or men except through her. As in the case with lamps on earth constructed of glass or some other transparent material, it is impossible to look at the light or enjoy its rays except through the lamp, so it is beyond the reach of all to look upwards to God or be helped by Him to make progress in any direction, except through the Ever-Virgin, this God-bearing lamp who is truly radiant with divine brightness. "God is in the midst of her," it says, "she shall not be moved" (Ps 46: 5).

If God requites us according to the measure of our love for Him, and he who loves the Son is loved by Him and by His Father, and becomes

in a mysterious way the dwelling of Both, as they make their home and walk in his soul, as the Lord promised (Jn 14: 23; cf. 2 Cor 6: 16), who could love Him more than His Mother? For not only was He her only Son, but she bore Him on her own without a spouse, so her parental love was naturally double, not being shared with a partner.

Thus she is both the treasury and the treasurer of the riches of the Godhead, and the highest ranks of Cherubim look to her and trust in her. They, above all others, are seized with longing for her, as, more than all others, they long for the outpouring of light and the granting of indescribable divine graces which come through her.

*St. Gregory Palamas*

**For more information on Eastern spirituality, visit  
[www.ecpubs.com](http://www.ecpubs.com)**