

SUNDAY AFTER THE
EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS



Icon of Saint Euphemia -- September 16th

September 16, 2012

SUNDAY AFTER THE UNIVERSAL EXALTATION OF THE PRECIOUS AND LIFE-GIVING CROSS;
THE HOLY GREAT MARTYR EUPHEMIA THE ALL-PRaised

TONE 7

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

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23 – SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; THE CONCEPTION OF THE HONORABLE AND GLORIOUS PROPHET, FORERUNNER AND BAPTIZER JOHN

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

For All Parishioners

Society of St. John Chrysostom Sponsored Event

The SSJC-WR co-sponsored program: A Coptic Perspective on Christianity and Islam, scheduled for Sept 22, 2012 at St. Marina Coptic Church, Irvine, has been **cancelled** by St. Marina Church in light of security concerns arising from the volatile political-religious situation consequent on the recent release of an anti-Islam film made in LA.

Парафіяльний Празник Parish Patronal Feast

On Sunday, September 30, we will have our traditional celebration of the feast of Покрова – The Holy Protection of the Mother of God. Tickets will be available in the church hall after Divine Liturgy.

Ticket prices:

Adults - \$15.00;

Youth (13-17) - \$10.00;

children 12 and under – Free.

Please Help! We need help to set up for the Praznyk Celebration in the Church Hall. Please come at 10:00 AM on Saturday, September 29. We also need help with serving and with clean up following the festivities.

Eastern Catholic Churches Encounter 2012 “Together in Christ”

November 2-4, 2012

Hacienda Hotel (at LAX)

525 N. Sepulveda Blvd.

El Segundo, CA 90245

Encounter 2012 will be an exciting blend of speakers, religious services in the various Eastern Catholic traditions, vendor displays and hospitality time.

One Theme “Together in Christ”

Encounter 2012 will be a unique gathering of all Eastern Catholic Churches in the U.S.A. and Canada represented by hierarchy, clergy, religious and laity “Together in Christ.”

One Purpose “Together in the vineyard of Christ...”

The purpose is to explore the call to discipleship received at baptism “All you who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia!”

The spirituality of discipleship calls clergy and laity *together* into the vineyard of Christ with Unity of Mission; Diversity in Ministry.

Individual Registration costs \$75.00. If we have a group of 5 or more, the cost is discounted to \$50.00. We have to opportunity to register together with Holy Angels and receive the discount. If you can commit to go, please speak with Fr. James so that we can coordinate with Holy Angels.

Issues for Catholic Voters: 2012 Edition

I Voting Our Values

Catholics make up about 30 percent of voters in national elections. Depending on voter turnout, these 36 to 39 million Catholics have the power to make our country a better nation that is more welcoming to life, more supportive of families, and more effective in its programs to help the poor and marginalized.

In recent years, Pope Benedict XVI and the U.S. bishops have been calling Catholics to renew their participation in American political life. That participation means, above all, to take the moral principles of the Catholic Faith into the voting booth.

As the Holy Father put it last May, our political action should be undertaken “in a manner coherent with the teaching of the Church.”

The Common Good

Catholic voters elect legislators whose job it is to make laws and policies that serve the common good. Thus, we expect our legislators to protect our basic human rights as stated in the Declaration of Independence—the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These rights don’t mean just anything; they are grounded in an authentic understanding of human life.

Once the right to liberty became an excuse to deny the right to life for the most innocent and vulnerable in society, politics lost its grounding in the truth about human existence. Catholics must use their political participation to reconnect politics with the Church’s teaching on the basic truth about the meaning of human life.

Human Dignity

For example, when the Church uses the phrase “human dignity,” she is always referring to the relationship that human beings have with God due to their being created in His likeness (Gen 1:26). To say that we possess an inherent dignity is a reminder that the human person is from God and destined after this earthly life to live with Him in eternity. That’s why an innocent life cannot be taken to make another life more comfortable or less complicated.

Human Rights

The notion of human rights follows from human dignity: Natural rights—the rights that precede any government or society—are the privileges or powers that we have the duty to respect so that all persons can seek genuine happiness in this world and the next (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC] 1930). Politicians differ on whether these rights require the government to fulfill them or merely protect the rights of individuals and groups to access them.

Catholic Voter

There is no Catholic vote in the sense of a bloc of voters that reliably supports a specific set of policies. However, the record shows that Catholics who attend Mass regularly vote more often and express heightened concern for issues at the core of Catholic social teaching. The more politicians begin to notice that there are millions of religiously active Catholics who vote their values, the more Catholics will have an opportunity to influence their leaders.

Four Confusions

1. Catholics who vote should not worry about the charge of “imposing” their values on others. Catholics do not seek laws requiring citizens to attend church or observe Lenten fasts. On the contrary, Catholics seek the protection of basic human rights through legislation and policy, such as the right to life and the right to educational freedom. Laws and policies embody the values we—as a nation—agree to live by.
2. Catholics know that the protection of the unborn is the dominant issue among all political issues—though some have criticized Catholics as being “single-issue” voters. The principle underlying the rejection of abortion extends to other issues, such as bioethics, population control, euthanasia, and defense. The mandate to protect life in politics is unconditional and should be forefront in the minds of Catholics as they cast their votes.

3. Not all the political positions taken by candidates are of equal importance to Catholics. As dominant-issue voters, Catholics should learn to give various issues their proper priority, thus preserving the hierarchy of values at the core of Church teaching—and the founding of America itself.
4. Catholics are often confused by the difference between principle and prudential argument. General *principles* are proposed in Church teaching; how they are implemented in a specific policy or piece of legislation is a matter of *prudential* judgment. It's crucial for Catholic voters to understand the principles so they may best consider the judgments put forward by politicians, Church officials, and other leaders.

Most importantly, Catholics should know there is no need to leave any part of the Faith outside of the voting booth. The tradition of Catholic moral and social teaching can be seen as a practical voting guide second to none.

Summary

- Catholics are called by the Church to participate in politics by voting.
- Legislators are elected to serve and protect the common good, human dignity, and the rights of human persons.
- Voters should have a clear understanding of the principles of Catholic moral and social teaching.
- The life issues are dominant in the hierarchy of issues for the Catholic voter.

II Applying the Principles: Prudential Judgment

Unlike the defense of unborn life, political judgments are rarely black and white. Most political judgments require prudence, the application of a general principle to a specific situation.

All Catholics bear the responsibility of making prudential judgments, but these judgments rely on information that is often not easily available. We need guidance, and the Holy Father offers it through his various writings, especially his encyclicals, while the U.S. bishops seek to educate us through the publications of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

The Bishops' Conference

The USCCB represents a merging in 2001 of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) and the United States Catholic Conference (USCC), which were created in 1966. Since then, the bishops have released more than 100 pastoral letters and statements that take positions on dozens of public policy matters ranging from handguns, racial prejudice, and U.S. relations with Panama to the treatment of

the aging, farm laborers, and war in the Middle East.

These statements are intended to educate Catholics on pressing issues of law and policy. But some confusion has also been unintentionally created by this official commentary on such a wide range of issues: Few Catholics make the distinction between binding statements of principle and the non-binding prudential judgments by the USCCB on policy issues and its support of specific pieces of legislation before Congress.

The bishops themselves recognize the potential for confusion and have addressed it directly, for example, in their pastoral letter "Economic Justice for All": "We do not claim to make these prudential judgments with the same kind of authority that marks our declarations of principle" (xii). Instead, the letters are attempts to apply Catholic principles to concrete situations. But the authority of bishops, as they make clear, in matters of faith and morals does not extend to their prudential judgments in other matters.

Prudential Judgment

Sound prudential judgment is a habit of mind that reasonably applies general principles to specific historical situations. “The prudent man determines and directs his conduct in accordance with this judgment. With the help of this virtue we apply moral principles to particular cases without error and overcome doubts about the good to achieve and the evil to avoid” (CCC 1806).

Catholics profit from the education in social teaching offered by the bishops and the Holy Father through their various documents, including pastoral letters and papal encyclicals. We can learn from the bishops’ and popes’ examples of how to think prudentially and how to gather the expertise and data necessary to put principle into practice.

But the habit of prudence belongs to each individual and not to a group. Prudence is not prudence when it is handed down like a rule to be followed. Individual prudential judgment follows from principles and cannot be commanded or dictated.

The U.S. bishops have clearly stated, “Decisions about candidates and choices about public policies require clear commitment to moral principles, careful discernment and prudential judgments based on the values of our faith” (“Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility”).

As Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory, a former president of the USCCB, wrote about the Iraq War, “People of good will may apply ethical principles and come to different prudential judgments, depending upon their assessment of the facts at hand and other issues” (“Letter to President Bush on Iraq,” September 13, 2002).

What’s important to recognize, first of all, is the commitment to principle at the core of policy recommendation. What must be considered is how effective a policy will be in implementing the principle that underlies it.

Summary

- Prudential judgment is the application of principle to concrete situations.
- Catholic principles apply to all political issues but, in many cases, do not lead prudentially to only one acceptable or “official” Catholic position. However, abortion, euthanasia, and gay marriage are matters of principle that do not admit prudential judgments, and therefore can never be supported.
- While the bishops’ teachings on faith and morals are binding, their prudential judgments on policy and legislation guide us but do not bind us.

*Smith, Matt; Hudson, Deal W. (2012-02-07).
Issues for Catholic Voters: 2012 Edition*

CatholicAdvocate.com



*Богородице Діво, радуйся,
благодатна Маріє, Господь з
тобою. Благословенна ти між
жінками, і благословенний плід
лона твого, бо ти породила
Христа Спаса, Избавителя душ
наших. Амінь*

PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS TO THE WAY OF THE CROSS

Fr. George Morelli Ph.D.

If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. (Mark 8:34)

This verse is from the gospel Orthodox Christians read the Sunday after the Elevation of the Cross. This counsel from Our Lord is essential in for our salvation. It is what will enable Christ to be in us and thus we achieve deification.

Consider making the 'cross' meaningful in our lives in practical ways. As an aid to this let us follow the sequence of events that lead to our Lord's crucifixion from the time after the Last Supper. Jesus left the Supper and went into the Garden. He knew the grueling ordeal He would have to endure. In His human nature He sweat blood and cried out: "Father if possible let this cup pass from me but not my will but thine be done."

How often do we anticipate some really bad things: crosses that may happen in our lives? It is the real 'crosses' in our lives that we have to carry. Unfortunately the human propensity to think irrationally and have distorted cognitions make carrying our crosses that much more difficult than it would be in reality.

Irrationality and distorted cognitions serve as psychological barriers to our sanctification. Errors in thinking lead humans to create scenarios that may never be. Often these scenarios are linked in a downward cascade or spiral of scenes leading to anticipated events (with no realistic foundation) which by another thinking error is "over-evaluated" as something more than 100% bad, awful, terrible and catastrophic.

Needless anxiety and depression of irrationality and distorted thinking processes are frequently the consequences. Instead of carrying the real crosses Our Lord allows us to face in our lives, we end up carrying fictitious crosses we ourselves create by our own 'faulty thinking.' This impedes our deification when we allow these emotional reactions to erode our love of God, dependency on Him and hope for our salvation.

Before taking up the real crosses in our lives, followers of Christ should do a mental inventory of the reality base of what are thought of as crosses. Unreal crosses are arrived at by our own faulty thinking. We may be given partial ambiguous information

about something and we draw a conclusion (unreal scenario) based on this.

A clinical example will illustrate this process. A parent receives a note from his/her child's teacher stating the child is having behavior problems in school. (Note how general and abstract description is: in my own clinical experience I have found teachers [and parents] frequently communicate in general terms [which provides no real information]) This is fertile ground for the parent to create scenarios. My child is hanging out with a drug crowd > My child is taking drugs > My child will fail in school > My child's whole life will be useless > This is terrible and awful > God how could you allow this > I cannot pray to you anymore > Why go to church and receive the holy mysteries. etc.

Any time scenarios are created by us in any area of life (family, school, relationships, health, employment etc. we should do a "reality check cognitive evaluation." Three questions are helpful: Where is the evidence? Is there any other way of looking at it? Is it as bad as it seems? Actually getting these answers frequently entails getting real information about problems we encounter in life.

There are real crosses in life. Let us make sure we pick up the real not fictitious ones. We can then apply our psychological strengths and spiritual efforts on the crosses which are real.

Our inclination will always be (for fictitious or real crosses) "let this cup pass from me". Our weak human nature wants us to complain, groan moan, show anger, despair or depression. How many of us go the step further and say "But Father not my will but thine be done." ... it will be hard but I am ready to accept what you are going to give me.

Give me the strength to do this; to accept your will. Jesus was arrested and condemned to death. Now is the time for us to accept our condemnation. The apostles and disciples in the Gospels, where they were gazing upon the Crucified Lord, learned how to love God above all creation and give their lives for others; We can learn in our own life as Our Lord showed us from His Cross: good and conquer evil, forgiveness can cancel retribution; and our hearts can be opened to all mankind, soothing and comforting the infirm, physically when we can but always spiritually.

Despite human fear Jesus accepted His cross, He even out of human weakness fell. But He got up again. He looked up to the Father, told the woman of Jerusalem not to weep for themselves but for their children. He allowed Simon the Cyrene to help him. ...[a great lesson here is we in the name of Christ and out of love can aid each other in carrying our crosses and achieve sanctification]. Most of all despite the falls Jesus kept going. If our cross were our actual physical murder (or murder of a loved one), could any of us call for the forgiveness of our killer, while falling and nailed to this cross? This is what Jesus did. “Father forgive them for they know not what they do. Clinically and pastorally many times someone has told me about some “slight” just received but cannot forgive. Yet in utter misery the Savior of the world, Almighty God Himself was able to reach out and ask forgiveness for His tormentors and killers.

Think of the worst sin you have ever committed Jesus took his cross for that sin. Think of the worst sin you could think of that would be possible for someone to commit on this earth. Multiply this sin to almost infinity. Jesus took up His cross to forgive that sin. He took up His cross to forgive every sin we have ever committed and will ever commit.

“Is any servant greater than his master?” Not only are we to willingly carry the crosses God allows in

our lives we are to at the same time continue to love Him, be dependent on Him and love and serve others and forgive them. Triumphant over sin He conquered death. By our cross, if we carry it as Jesus did, we conquer death.

One more key. Jesus is both God and man. We are only creatures: Man. We have to do what the penitent thief did: Repent. We have to acknowledge our sinfulness “Truly we deserve our punishment ...but this man did nothing”: We have the Holy Mystery of Confession ...Every time we miss it we act as the arrogant thief...we condemn ourselves. If we proclaim our sinfulness the priest echoes Our Lord’s words on the cross to the “good thief” “...I unworthy priest forgive and absolve you for all your sins and transgressions”...“today you will be with me in paradise.”

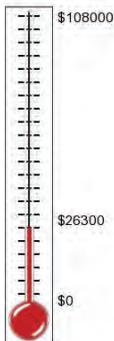
V. Rev. Fr. George Morelli Ph.D. is a licensed Clinical Psychologist and Marriage and Family Therapist, Coordinator of the Chaplaincy and Pastoral Counseling Ministry of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, and Religion Coordinator (and Antiochian Archdiocesan Liaison) of the Orthodox Christian Association of Medicine, Psychology and Religion.

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.

Stewardship Pledges
Pledges received: 11

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.



Sunday offering for September 9

Amount	Number
\$10.00	2
\$20.00	2
\$30.00	2
\$40.00	2
\$50.00	2
\$75.00	1
\$80.00	1
\$100.00	1
\$400.00	1
\$955.00	16 Parishioners

Parishioner Total: \$955.00

Average / parish household (39): \$24.49

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00

Shortfall: (\$1170.00)



**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

Spiritual Counsel

But then there is another source of the sacrament of confession as we know it today. This is the practice of spiritual counsel, first found especially in the Egyptian monasticism of the fourth century, though no doubt the practice of using spiritual counsel goes right back to apostolic times. But we don't know very much about it until the emergence of monasticism.

In the desert of Egypt, as we have learned from the Gerontikon and the Apothigmata – or Sayings of the Desert Fathers – an important part was played by the disclosure of thoughts. The disciple would go perhaps daily to his spiritual elder, his staretz, and open his heart to him. Now this is something clearly different from the system of public penance. First of all, it is regular, not exceptional. In many monastic centers, this happens daily. Secondly, it is private, not public. It is carried out under conditions of confidentiality. It doesn't directly involve the Church hierarchy.

The spiritual father – in a monastic context, the elder – may in fact be a layman, not a priest. Anthony

of Egypt was never a priest but he formed in many ways the prototype of the monastic spiritual father. Athanasius calls him a physician given by God to all of Egypt. The spiritual father of St. Simeon the New Theologian of the eleventh century – Simeon the Studite – was not a priest. Indeed, the giving of spiritual counsel can surely be done by a lay Christian – a man or woman – a person not in monastic vows at all, though that is more exceptional.

In this practice of spiritual counsel, the scope is far wider than in the formal penance of the Church. What you disclose to your elder is not just your sins, but your thoughts. You don't just speak of what you've done wrong, you share with him your inner state, your whole situation. The hope is that by revealing your thoughts to your elder, you will in fact avoid falling into sin. In other words, penance is retrospective, picking up the pieces after the breakage; but, through the use of spiritual counsel, you hope to avoid the breakage itself.

Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware)