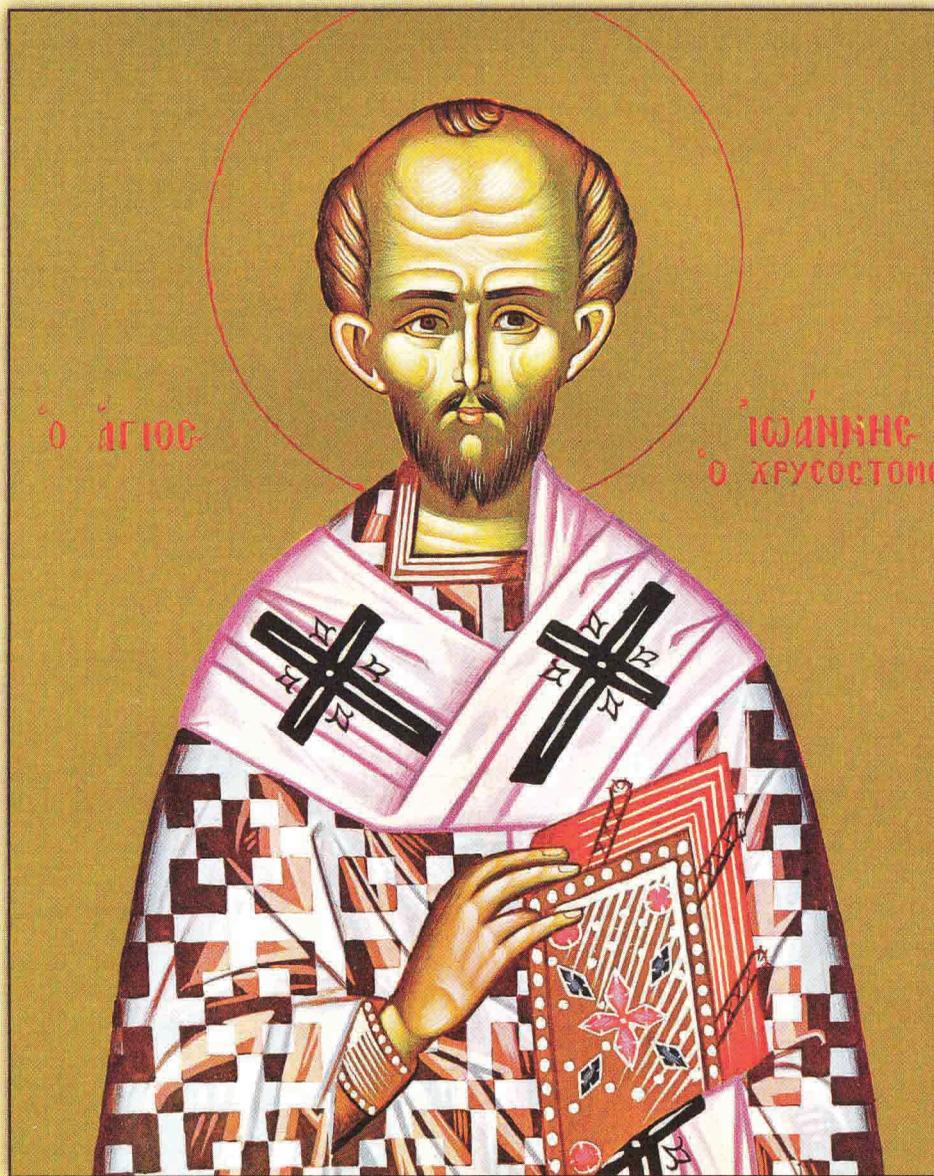


TWENTY SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
EIGHTH SUNDAY OF LUKE



*Icon of Saint John Chrysostom -- November 13th*





## ON ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ETHICS

By Fr. John Parsells



The basis of Orthodox Christian Ethics can be found in the Church's teaching on the relationship between God and the man whom He made in His Image and Likeness. The Fathers teaches that God, in His infinite Goodness, created man in His own image and likeness so that man might share in His Life; man was the perfect vessel made to be filled with the perfect God. The command of God, which summarizes all the commandments, "be ye holy for I the Lord your God am holy", was a call for man to fulfill his destiny by sharing in God's holiness by being filled with His divine life, love, light, goodness, wisdom, patience, honor, joy, self-control, humility, and all the other virtues.

According to the Sacred Scriptures, man is to unite himself to the loving God, Who requires moral and ethical uprightness, by 1) pursuing good rather than evil, 2) doing right instead of wrong, and 3) desiring only what is appropriate to his good nature. All three of these components are necessary and must occur within man at the same time in order for him to reach his potential.

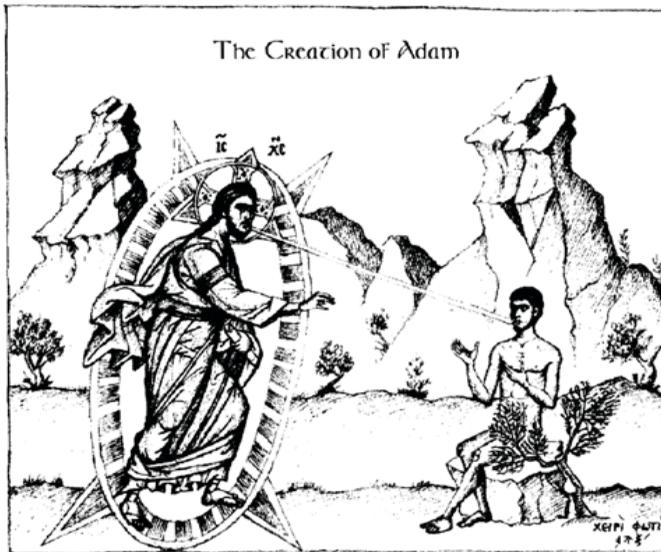
As the Holy Trinity is the perfect model of a Community of Persons united in Love, so too man must be unite himself to God and neighbor in Divine Love. This is the Son's prayer to the Father, "that they all may be one; as Thou,

Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us ... that they may be perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." Therefore, the full revelation of the goodness of God and the potential of man is found in the God-man, Jesus Christ, "Who is the brightness of the Father's glory, the express Image of the His Person," and Who, according to St. Maximos the Confessor, is the Prototype for the creation of all mankind. Consequently,

Orthodox Ethics and Orthodox Dogmatics both teach that man can only reach his destiny, or the fulfillment of his God-given potential, by becoming Christ-like.

Some non-revelatory and therefore non-Orthodox ethical systems are based on the following:

- 1) *Utilitarianism* – right is the greatest good for the greatest number, 2) *Hedonism* – right is what brings pleasure, 3) *Egoism* – right is dependant upon the will of an individual, 4) *Tyrannism* – might is right, 5) *Aristotelianism* – right is moderation, 6) *Cultural Relativism* – right is dependant upon the views of a cultural group, 7) *Eudemonism* – right is what makes man happy, 8) *Legalism* – right is what is determined by the law currently in use, 9) *Emotivism* – right is entirely dependant upon emotionally feeling,



10) *Secular humanism* – right is determined entirely by human needs, values, and interest on a level entirely free from the influence of God. All of these ethical systems leave man falling short of his destiny to share in God’s goodness and eternal life.

Therefore man must learn to reject the above mentioned faulty ethical systems, which are based upon his own idea of what is right and wrong, and learn to discern the will of God. There are number of ways in which man may seek out the will of God: 1) following the Lord’s teaching in His Church, Scripture, Tradition, etc., 2) examination of conscience, 3) thorough assessment of possibilities, 4) consideration of consequences for everyone involved, 5) scrutiny of the goal in mind, 6) assessment of motives (passion or love), 7) appropriateness of the means, not just the end, 8) consideration of alternatives, 9) awareness of spiritual factors in those involved, 10) readiness for the situation – experience, 11) existence of promises or obligations, 12) the effect on relationships involved, 13) counsel of the wise – spiritual father, 14) humble prayer, 15) guidance of the Holy Spirit, and 16) the presence of peace in the heart – one should not act in doubt but in faith. If there are no red flags and the majority of the aforementioned factors are favorable, then one should place one’s trust in God and take the action believed to be His will. Should a mistake be made, one should repent and try again.

The practice of Orthodox Christian ethics is an ascetical endeavor of submitting our will to God’s will, so that we might share in His divine life. Learning to live ethically is learning to become Christ-like, learning to live as God lives. ***The bottom line: Ethics come from God and lead us to Him.***

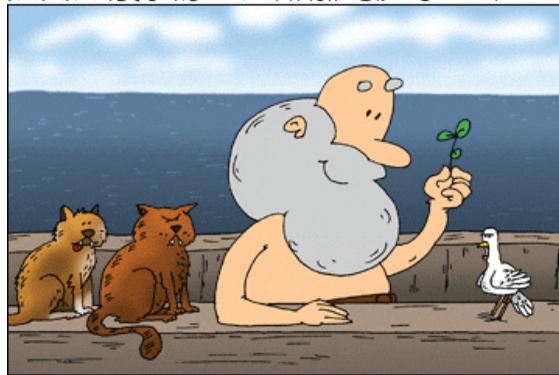
*The true aim of a Christian life is to acquire the Spirit of God, while prayer, vigil, fasting, almsgiving, and other good works done for Christ’s sake are merely means for acquiring it.*  
– St. Seraphim of Sarov



### *NEW UKRAINIAN PATRIARCH TO ADDRESS THE USCCB*

His Beatitude, Patriarch Sviatoslav Shevchuk, Head of the Worldwide Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, will address the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) this Monday, November 14, 2011, at 2:10 p.m. His address will be broadcast live on the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN).

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(See Genesis 6-8)

09-16-2011

**YOU THROW THE CATS OVERBOARD AND I'LL  
TELL YOU WHERE I FOUND THE BRANCH**

## Gossip: Sowing the Bad Seed

R.G. LeTourneau, the owner of a large earth-moving equipment company tells the story. “We used to have a scraper known as the model ‘G’. Somebody asked one of our salesmen one day what the ‘G’ stood for. The salesman, after thinking a few seconds, replied, “Well, I guess the ‘G’ stands for ‘Gossip’, because like gossip, this machine moves a lot of dirt and moves it fast.”

In the gospel reading for the 4th Sunday of Luke 8:5-15 which we heard 4 weeks ago, Jesus explains the Parable of the Sower. He says that the seed is the Word of God. By inference we know that God is the sower. We confess in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed that God is the creator of all things. Fashioned in God’s own image and likeness, we humans also have the ability to create. Thus, we are co-creators with God. We are also co-sowers with God. We too can spread the seed, the Word of God. By witnessing to what is right, good, holy and true, we help to plant Jesus Christ, in the hearts and minds of those around us.

However, we can also plant other types of seeds. If we are doing or saying things that are not right, good, holy and true, then we are planting bad seeds. In fact, one could say we are spreading herbicide that kills the true seed. In doing this, we are no longer being creative. Rather, we are being destructive. Good seeds are words/

actions of love, encouragement, praise, kindness, compassion, forgiveness, peace, joy. Bad seeds/herbicide are words/actions of criticism, gossip, slander, envy, malice, hatred, jealousy. Good seeds produce more of the same good things and help people to work together to create more good. Bad seeds produce more bad things that sow dissension, division, doubt. Destruction is their end.

What is an example of a bad seed? Returning to our earth-moving scraper example, gossip and slander can be very destructive. Referring to gossip as ‘dirt’ reveals its true nature. Gossip is messy news that does not reflect well on its subject. If it’s really bad, it’s referred to as ‘mud’ and gossip or slander is called ‘mud-sliding’. Gossip moves fast because of two reasons. One, we have the habit of sharing juicy tidbits about someone with other people as soon as we hear it. It’s like a hot potato that must be passed along as quickly as possible. Even if it’s only shared with two people, we have just doubled the gossip. If they do the same, it’s an exponential increase. The second reason gossip moves fast is because we want to hear what’s wrong with other people. We actually ask for it. “So what’s the dirt on George? Have you heard anything about Georgia? No, I haven’t heard but tell me what you’ve heard that’s going on at St. George.”

As gossip moves fast, the destruction spreads. The spoken word is a powerful force. When we hear unflattering news about someone, it sticks in our mind. Once there, it colors and distorts our perception of that person. We tend to see them, their words and actions, as motivated by these negative characterizations. The saddest part is that what we have heard about them is often untrue. Many of us are familiar with the gossip game or experiment to show it's nature of distortion. A group of people are put in a line, the first person whispers something gossipy in the ear of the person next to them. That person passes it along in the same way to the next and so on down the line until the end. The last person then says out loud what they heard. More often than not, it's substantially different than what the first person said.

If gossip is so destructive, why do we allow it, why do we welcome it, and why do we share it? Looking back at Jesus' teaching today, He says that the good seed, the Word of God, takes root and grows in a noble and good heart. Bad seed or gossip will enter and take root when our heart is lacking in goodness and nobility. In other words, it's the condition of our heart that causes us to participate in the sad and real game of gossip. We may have resentment and bitterness specifically towards the person we gossip about. These same negative feelings may cause us to speak out and hurt others with whom we have no specific issue. A sense of inadequacy or alienation

can motivate us to get in the middle of gossip and become an important person, an insider who has news to share.

What's the antidote to gossip? From the Parable of the Sower, we learned that we must guard the garden/field of our heart by getting off the busy wayside. Gossip travels when people are too busy to pay attention to the effect of their words and how it tramples people under their feet. We learned that we must actively pull out the weeds and thorns of earthly pleasures. When gossip arrives at our hear, we have a choice to spread it or kill it, to think about it or forget it. We learned that a good and noble heart is one that is regularly tilled and turned over with self-examination, repentance and confession. Without this, our heart turns hard and callous and becomes more vulnerable to the temptation of idle talk.

In conclusion, the Sacrament of Holy Confession is the supreme antidote to gossip and slander. Why? In confession, we do not talk about others, but we talk about ourselves and our own dirt. Through our words, the guidance of the priest and the forgiveness of God, all the anger, bitterness, hurt, and inadequacy are washed away and we become clean again. Through this katharsis or cleansing, all our bad, gossipy news leaves us and dead-ends, never to be heard or talked about again, in the confidentiality of our spiritual father on earth and God the Father in heaven. Amen!

## ON FASTING

Fr. Thomas Hopko

Orthodox Christians believe that their spiritual lives start with their stomachs. They believe that when peoples' eating is right their spirits can be more open to God and more attentive to all that is good, true, and beautiful in life. When, on the contrary, peoples' eating is wrong, their minds are disordered; their emotions are rebellious; and their flesh rules their being and behavior in harmful ways.

Right eating means to eat the right foods in the right amounts at the right times in the right ways for the right reasons. People who eat properly prepare and partake of their meals with discipline and dignity, free from emotional drives and carnal desires. They do this to serve God, their fellow creatures, and their own well-being more effectively, fruitfully, and joyfully.

The Church provides guidelines for healthy eating and sane fasting. The Lord Jesus Christ is the first and final Teacher on the subject, as He is on all others.

Christ and His apostles feasted and fasted. They affirmed that God gives all foods to be enjoyed with thanksgiving (Act 10:10-15; Rom 14:6). They also warned that eating can become idolatrous. St. Paul, for example, speaks of "persons (who) do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own belly" (Rom 16:18). "Their end," he says, "is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things" (Phil 3:19).

The Scriptures and the Saints teach that in eating and fasting, moderation is the rule for it leads to freedom from the carnal passions: lust, greed, anger, sadness, sloth, and despondency. While excesses of any kind are harmful and destructive, leading to either to gluttony and drunkenness, or to pride, vainglory, ungodly zeal, condemnation of others, and spiritual delusion.

## ***Q. Is it better not to show up if I know I'm going to be late to church?***

**A.** It's always better to show up late to church rather than not at all. That being said though, it is always better to be not just on time for church, but even a little early. We should try to be a little early so that we can gather our thoughts from the cares of the world and redirect them to God. By doing this before the service begins we will be ready to receive Christ who tells us that when two or three are gathered together in His Name, He is in their midst. (Matt. 18:20)

Even in the secular world, if we are expecting the visit of a person of honor, we make sure that we not only arrive before he does but we also make sure that we are ready to receive him properly. This is why we should arrive in church early and then instead of conversing with our neighbor (which there is time to do after the service), we should set about our primary task, which is to turn our minds to God and warm our hearts in prayer.



### October 2011 Church Finances

Collections	Rent	Other donations	Expenses	Deficit
\$5382	\$2500	\$0	\$13400	-\$5518

### October 2011 UBC Finances

Rent	Expenses	Deficit
\$6454	\$14380	-\$7926



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

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Parish Office: (619) 697-5085

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

**Pastor:** Fr. James Bankston

**Парох:** о. Яків Бенкстон

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***Reflection on the Good Samaritan***

First, we must pity the ill fortune of the man who fell unarmed and helpless among robbers, and who was so rash and unwise as to choose the road in which he could not escape the attack of robbers. For the unarmed can never escape the armed, the heedless the villain, the unwary the malicious. Since malice is ever armed with guile, fenced round with cruelty, fortified with deceit, and ready for fierce attack...

He poured in wine, that is, the blood of His passion, and oil, that is, the anointing of the chrism, that pardon might be granted by His blood, sanctification be conferred by the chrism...

The wounded parts are bound up by the heavenly Physician, and containing a salve within themselves, are by the working of the remedy restored to their former soundness. Having

poured in wine and oil, he placed him upon His beast...

For the Inn is the Church, which receives travelers, who are tired with their journey through the world, and oppressed with the load of their sins; where the wearied traveler casting down the burden of his sins is relieved, and after being refreshed is restored with wholesome food. And this is what is here said, and took care of him. For outside is everything that is conflicting, hurtful and evil, while within the Inn is contained all rest and health...

He said, if you see any one oppressed, say not surely he is wicked; but be he Gentile or Jew and need help, dispute not, he has a claim to your assistance, into whatever evil he has fallen.

*St. John Chrysostom*