

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of Saint Clement of Rome -- November 24th

November 24, 2013

27TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – TONE 2

POSTFEAST OF ENTRANCE INTO THE TEMPLE; THE HOLY GREAT MARTYR CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA; THE HOLY GREAT MARTYR MERCURIUS

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 25 – DECEMBER 1

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 28 – THE HOLY VENERABLE MARTYR STEPHEN THE NEW; THE HOLY MARTYR IRENARCHUS
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy of Thanksgiving
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30 – THE HOLY AND ALL-PRAISED APOSTLE ANDREW, THE FIRST-CALLED
6:00 PM – Great Vespers for Sunday (*satisfies for Sunday obligation*)
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1 – 28TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; THE HOLY PROPHET NAHUM
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners

Pastoral Visit by Bishop Richard

Our Father and Bishop Richard, will make a pastoral visit to our parish on Sunday, December 22nd. In preparation for the bishop's visit, we need to have a choir practice. Watch for further information in future bulletins.

HOLODOMOR COMMEMORATION

On Sunday, November 24th at 11:30 AM there will be a joint Ecumenical Panakhyda at Holy Protection Ukrainian Orthodox Church, 9558 Campo Road, Spring Valley, 91977. Following the Panakhyda there will be a short program to commemorate the Holodomor.

Sunday offering for November 17

Amount	Number
\$10.00	1
\$20.00	5 (1 loose)
\$25.00	1
\$30.00	1
\$40.00	1
\$50.00	2
\$60.00	1
\$75.00	1
\$80.00	2
\$100.00	3
\$120.00	1
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\$860.00	

Parishioner Total: \$840.00
Guest: \$20.00

Average / parish household (42): \$20.00
Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00
Shortfall: **-\$1285.00**

Our Starting Point For Change

“Our starting point is always wrong. Instead of beginning with ourselves, we always want to change others first and ourselves last. If everyone would begin first with themselves, then there would be peace all around! St. John Chrysostom said that no one can harm the man who does not injure himself – not even the devil. You see, we are the sole architects of our future.”

Elder Thaddeus (+2002)



ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW
ON THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UKRAINIAN HOLODOMOR

Beloved in the Lord: grace and peace be unto you.

It is with all great pride, albeit with heavy heart that we are communicating with all of you today from the historic and martyric Mother Church of Constantinople on the solemn occasion of the eightieth anniversary of the Holodomor of the Ukrainian Nation.

As we prayerfully commemorate the tragic and inhumane events during the years 1932-1933, when countless people lost their lives through deliberate and brutal famine, we pray for the repose of the victims' souls and for the healing of this painful wound in the conscience of your blessed Nation. It is impossible to fathom the magnitude and intensity of such hostility, which caused human beings to destroy other human beings created "in the image and likeness" of God – all supposedly in the name of political ideologies, but ultimately only fuelled by falsehood and godlessness.

In our time, dearly beloved, we are obliged to remember the past and learn from its tragedies so that we may understand how to move ahead into the future with compassion and forgiveness. We are called to discern and avoid every spiteful ideology and divisive prejudice, which discriminate against other people either individually or collectively whether on ethnic and racial or religious and cultural differences. As Orthodox Christians, we must at all times strive to bridge differences and cultivate fraternal relations with all people, while remaining humbly faithful to our own ecclesiastical teachings and traditions.

"I am the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6), says our Lord. With this divine assurance, we find great consolation and encouragement. For it is in the Church as His sacred Body that we are spared of sorrow and suffering, while at the same time we find strength to forgive and love all people.

May God grant rest to the souls of all victims of the Holodomor. And may God bless all of you.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen

+ **BARTHOLOMEW**
Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome
and Ecumenical Patriarch

A MEAL OF UNITY

Christian reflections on Thanksgiving dinner

Families like to meet together for a meal. When the family is large and particularly close to one another, it usually develops this family meal into a kind of ritual. Most Americans find this most clearly expressed in the traditional Thanksgiving Dinner, held every year. The time and place are important for Thanksgiving Dinner, so too is the menu which must be built around certain meats—usually a big turkey—and certain other traditional dishes, such as cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie. Other ritualistic elements are usually developed when a family meets over a number of years for this traditional meal: certain persons have certain functions, definite places to sit, preparation rites are evolved into a strict custom, certain routines become traditional after the meal is finished. And when the afternoon is finished, everyone goes away back to his own daily round of living strengthened once more in the sense of oneness with this family. This conviction of unity and mutual support will bolster each person often in times of frustration or loneliness which come into all our lives. No family should be without a traditional meal. All of us, even those who cannot have such a gathering at Thanksgiving, know that this is true. Some families find that many more than one family meal each year is needed. And these families usually enjoy a unity and strength among themselves that is envied by others.

The Christian Family—the Family of God—also need their Meal of Unity.

This need was well understood by Jesus Christ, and He instituted the Christian meal for all His followers. He did it very simply: He took bread and said, “This is my body.” Then He broke it and gave it to His followers to eat. He took wine and said, “This is my blood.” Then He gave it to them to drink. Then He said, “Do this in memory of me.” As the Apostles ate, they realized that they were becoming one with each other by Christ Himself entering into all of them. It is on this strength that they lived and gave witness to Christ all over the world. This meal and its effects on the Christians who ate of it immediately fulfilled the prayer which Christ said to His Father on that same night: “That they may be one Father, in you and you in me. . . that they may be one in us.” From that day until now, Christians have always met together in the traditional Breaking of Bread.

Christians, too, over the years have evolved a thorough ritual as the setting for this traditional Meal of Unity. Orthodox Christians in particular have developed a preparation rite, the Eucharistic Prayer, the Epiclesis, which invokes the Holy Spirit to “descend upon us and these gifts here offered” and to change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ so that the Orthodox Faithful may break this Bread of Life and receive it unto themselves for the “remission of sins and Life Everlasting.”

Christians who come together for this Eucharistic Meal should come carrying

the gifts which they want to contribute. In early Christian days each one did literally carry gifts to the Altar, much like Aunt Jane brings a casserole or Uncle George brings a bottle of wine to Thanksgiving Dinner. Nowadays the preparation of gifts is done in our Churches through one representative of the whole assembly, the Priest, who brings the bread and wine to the Altar in the Great Entrance. Each of us, though, should give our lives and our sincere dedication to Christ's way of life while our representative is preparing the Gifts. The meal which we are readying on our Altars is, after all, OUR meal. OUR Breaking of the Bread. Of course, the Priest has the main function during the meal, because he is specially Ordained with the Grace of God to represent the community to God, as well as representing Christ before the community. But our function is also evidently meaningful; we come forward and eat from the Breaking of the Bread. We, like the Apostles, realize that all the assembly eating from this Holy Banquet are partaking of the same Christ which is filling us. We move back to our places with a sense of deep unity growing within us and all around us. There is a togetherness in this which penetrates us. There is a strength in this which fills us with a sense of power. There is a solemn conviction in this which makes us feel more and more Divine. We join together with all Orthodox Christians in this Breaking of the Bread. . . but we join with Jesus Christ in the deepest sense of our being. All of us are one, not only together, but in Christ.

When a family leaves a Thanksgiving Dinner, they are strong against frustration and loneliness. When Orthodox Christians leave their Eucharistic Meal of Unity, the Breaking of the Bread, they have a deep conviction that they are all joined together in a renewed commitment to witnessing Christ in their own world. At the end of the Gathering, the Priest says, "Let us depart in peace, let us pray to the Lord." Surely this is clear truth. We indeed depart with Christ in us. We go in peace, the peace which Christ alone can give. We go to take Christ into whatever work is ours. Christ goes with us—with each of us, with all of us—and we know that large numbers of Orthodox Christians eat of the same Bread, and live on the strength of the same Jesus Christ. The more we eat His Flesh and drink His Blood, the more life, His Life, we have in us. And that life vivifies our actions till they become obviously and powerfully Christian. We witness Christ to others—individually and all together. Never will we be alone again. Together with countless other Orthodox Christians we are doing Christ's work. Christ working through us will remove all frustration. He will make our lives successful. If today's Orthodox Christians gather frequently for the Breaking of the Bread of Life, then people will say what the Romans said of the early Christians—and a touch of envy will be in their words: "See how they love one another.

*By Fr. Mark Beshara,
St. Michael's Church, Van Nuys, CA*

November 24, 2013

27th Sunday after Pentecost, Octoechos Tone 2

Holy Great-Martyr Catherine; Holy Great-Martyr Mercurius

Catherine was the daughter of King Constus. After the death of her father, she lived with her mother in Alexandria. Her mother was secretly a Christian who, through her spiritual father, brought Catherine to the Christian Faith. In a vision, St. Catherine received a ring from the Lord Jesus Himself as a sign of her betrothal to Him. This ring remains on her finger even today. Catherine was greatly gifted by God and was well educated in Greek philosophy, medicine, rhetoric and logic. In addition to that, she was of unusual physical beauty. When the iniquitous Emperor Maxentius offered sacrifices to the idols and ordered others to do the same, Catherine boldly confronted the emperor and denounced his idolatrous errors. The emperor, seeing that she was greater than he in wisdom and knowledge, summoned fifty of his wisest men to debate with her on matters of faith and to put her to shame. Catherine outwitted and shamed them. In a rage, the emperor ordered all fifty of those men burned. By St. Catherine's prayers, all fifty confessed the name of Christ and declared themselves Christians before their execution. After Catherine had been put in prison, she converted the emperor's commander, Porphyrius, and two hundred soldiers to the true Faith, as well as Empress Augusta-Vasilissa herself. They all suffered for Christ. During the torture of St. Catherine, an angel of God came to her and destroyed the wheel on which the holy virgin was being tortured. Afterward, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself appeared to her and comforted her.

After many tortures, Catherine was beheaded at the age of eighteen, on November 24, 310. Milk, instead of blood, flowed from her body. Her miracle-working relics repose on Mount Sinai.

When Emperor Decius once waged war against the barbarians, there was in his army the commander of an Armenian regiment called the Martensians. This commander was named Mercurius. In battle, an angel of the Lord appeared to Mercurius, placed a sword in his hand, and assured him of victory over his enemies. Indeed, Mercurius displayed wonderful courage, mowing down the enemy like grass. Following this glorious victory Emperor Decius made him chief commander of his army, but envious men reported Mercurius to the emperor for being a Christian, a fact which he did not hide but openly acknowledged before the emperor. Mercurius was tortured harshly and at length; he was cut into strips with knives and burned with fire. An angel of God appeared to him in prison and healed him. Finally, the emperor proclaimed that General Mercurius be beheaded in Cappadocia. When they beheaded him, his body became as white as snow and emitted a most wonderful incense-like fragrance. His miracle-working relics healed many of the sick. This most wonderful soldier of Christ suffered for the Faith sometime between the years 251 and 259 and took up his habitation in the Kingdom of his King and God. . (*Prologue of Ohrid*)

FORTY SHOPPING (AND FASTING) DAYS UNTIL CHRISTMAS

From OCA.org / By Fr. Steven Kostoff

On November 15, we observed the first day of the 40-day Nativity/Advent Fast, meant to prepare us for the advent of the Son of God in the flesh. For some/many of us, this might very well catch us unaware and unprepared. However, as the saying goes, “it is what it is,” and so the Church calendar directs us to enter into this sacred season on that day. This indicates an intensification of the perennial “battle of the calendars” in which every Orthodox Christian is engaged—consciously or unconsciously. The two calendars – the ecclesial and the secular – represent the Church and “the world” respectively. Often, there is an underlying tension between these two spheres. Because of that tension, I believe that we find ourselves in the rather peculiar situation of being ascetical and consumerist simultaneously. To fast, pray and be charitable is to lead a simplified life that is based around restraint—a certain discipline and a primary choice to live according to the principles of the Gospel in a highly secularized and increasingly hedonistic world. That is what it means to be ascetical. It further means to focus upon Christ amidst an ever-increasing number of distractions and diversions. Even with the best of intentions and a firm resolve, that is not easy! From our historical perspective of being alive in the 21st century, and leading the “good life” where everything is readily available, practicing any form of voluntary self-restraint is tantamount to bearing a cross. Perhaps fulfilling some modest goals based on the Gospel in today’s world, such as it is, amounts to a Christian witness, unspectacular as those goals may be.

Yet, as our society counts down the remaining shopping days until Christmas; and as our spending is seen as almost a patriotic act of contributing to the buildup of our failing economy; and as we want to “fit in” – especially for the sake of our children – we also are prone (or just waiting) to unleashing the “consumer within,” always alert to the joys of shopping, spending and accumulating. When one adds in the unending “entertainment” designed to create a holiday season atmosphere, it can all become rather overwhelming. Certainly, these are some

of the joys of family life, and we feel a deep satisfaction when we surround our children with the warmth and security that the sharing of gifts brings to our domestic lives. Perhaps, though, we can be vigilant about knowing when “enough is enough”—or even better, when “enough is a feast.” An awareness—combined with sharing—of those who have next to nothing is also a way of overcoming our own self-absorption and expanding our notion of the “neighbor.”

Therefore, to be both an ascetic and a consumer is indicative of the challenges facing us as Christians in a world that clearly favors and “caters” to our consumerist tendencies. To speak honestly, this is a difficult and uneasy balance to maintain. How can it possibly be otherwise, when to live ascetically is to restrain those very consumerist tendencies? I believe that what we are essentially trying to maintain is our identity as Orthodox Christians within the confines of a culture either indifferent or hostile to Christianity. If the Church remains an essential part of the buildup toward Christmas, then we can go a long way in maintaining that balance. Although I do not particularly like putting it this way, I would contend that if the Church is a place of choice that at least “competes” with the mall, then that again may be one of the modest victories in the underlying battle for our ultimate loyalty to which a consumerist Christmas season awakens us. The Church directs us to fast before we feast. Does that make any sense? Do we understand the theological/spiritual principles that are behind such an approach? Can we develop some domestic strategies that will give us the opportunity to put that into practice to, at least some extent? Do we care enough?

The final question always returns us to the question that Jesus asked of his disciples: “Who do you say that I am?” If we, together with St. Peter, confess that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the Living God,” then we know where we stand as the “battle of the calendars” intensifies for the next 40 days.



**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква
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Saint Clement of Rome

St. Clement was the bishop of Rome and third in succession from St. Peter. Around the year 95 AD, a letter was written by the Church of Rome to the Church at Corinth that is attributed to Saint Clement. This document is the earliest Christian writing besides the New Testament documents. In fact, the Gospel of John is likely written around the same time as this document.

This "first letter of Clement" (a second letter was falsely attributed to him) was copied by the Corinthian Church and circulated all over the empire, rendering the very first papal "encyclical." It was so highly regarded by the universal church that for several centuries the Church in Egypt and elsewhere regarded it as one of the New Testament scriptures.

The Church of St. Clement is one of the most fascinating places in Rome. Excavations revealed that the medieval Church, built in the

12th century, actually was built on top of a 4th century Church which was in turn built over a house church going back to the first century. It is very possible that this was the house of St. Clement himself.

Saint Clement in his Epistle to the Corinthians prays a blessing for all that call upon God.

"May God, who sees all things, and who is the Ruler of all spirits and the Lord of all flesh, who chose our Lord Jesus Christ and us through Him to be a special people, grant to every soul that calls upon His glorious and holy Name, faith, fear, peace, patience, long-suffering, self-control, purity, and sobriety, to the well-pleasing of His Name, through our High Priest and Protector, Jesus Christ, by whom be to Him glory, and majesty, and power, and honor, both now and forevermore. Amen."