

TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



*Icon of Saint Ann and Mary*

**December 9, 2012**

*TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
THE CONCEPTION OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS BY ST. ANNE*

**TONE 3**

*SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 10 – DECEMBER 16*

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15 – *THE HOLY HIEROMARTYR ELEUTHERIUS; OUR VENERABLE FATHER PAUL OF MOUNT LATROS; OUR HOLY FATHER STEPHEN THE CONFESSOR, ARCHBISHOP OF SUROZH*

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy                      ⚔ Philip & Josephine Erko; req: Mary Kitt

6:00 PM – Great Vespers of Sunday

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16 – *SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS; THE HOLY PROPHET HAGGAI*

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy                      For All Parishioners



### **Catechetical Video Series**

Today, after the Divine Liturgy we continue showing a series of catechetical videos. The first series to be shown will be “Catholicism” by Fr. Robert Barrons.

“‘Catholicism’ could well become one of the most significant efforts ever to advance what Pope John Paul II called ‘The New Evangelization.’”

— George Weigel,  
Biographer of Pope John Paul II

A future video series will be “The Way: Intruding Orthodox Christianity.”

**Please attend! Будьмо Уважні!**

### *Flower Collection*

*Special envelopes are available in the back of the church do help with the purchase of flowers for the Feast of the Nativity.*

### **A new member of God’s Church!**



**The Holy Mysteries of Initiation** were celebrated today welcoming into our community Emma Yulia Hirniak, daughter of Joseph and Oksana Hirniak.

**Многая і благая Літа! ManyBlessed Years!**

The Pastoral Council has been reinstated. If you have any pastoral concerns you are encouraged to contact any of the members.

Vladimir Bachynsky: 619-865-1279

Mark Hartman: 619-540-4858

Luke Miller: 858-354-2008

THE AGE OF CASUAL CATHOLICISM IS OVER, THE AGE OF HEROIC CATHOLICISM HAS BEGUN. WE CAN NO LONGER BE CATHOLICS BY ACCIDENT BUT INSTEAD WE MUST BE CATHOLICS BY CONVICTION.

FR. TERRENCE HENRY, TOR,  
FRANCISCAN UNIVERSITY OF STEUBENVILLE

**9 December ~ The Conception by  
St. Anna of the Most Holy Theotokos**

**St. Anna and the Theotokos**

According to the ancient tradition of the Church, since Saint Anna, the Ancestor of God, was barren, she and her husband Joachim remained without children until old age. Therefore, sorrowing over their childlessness, they besought God with a promise that, if He were to grant them the fruit of the womb, they would offer their offspring to Him as a gift. And God, hearkening to their supplication, informed them through an Angel concerning the birth of the Virgin. And thus, through God's promise, Anna conceived according to the laws of nature, and was deemed worthy to become the mother of the Mother of our Lord (see also Sept. 8).

**Apolytikion in the Fourth Tone**

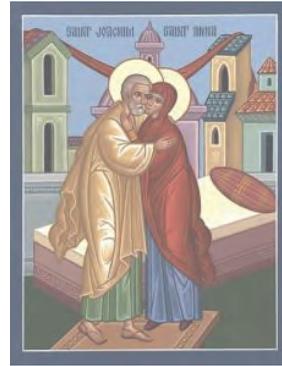
*Against all hope, the bonds of barrenness are loosed today. For, God has hearkened unto Joachim and Anna clearly promising that they would bear a godly maiden. He who commanded the angel to cry out to her, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you," will be born of her, the infinite One Himself, becoming man.*

**Kontakion in the Fourth Tone**

*Today the world rejoices in the conception of Anna, wrought by God. For she bore the One who beyond comprehension conceived the Logos.*

**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.



**HYMN OF PRAISE**

*The Conception of the  
Most-holy Theotokos by Saint Anna*

O Most-glorious God, wonderful and marvelous,  
Kind and merciful toward all creation,  
The proud do You overturn, the humble do You  
raise;  
You Who does extinguish, You Who makes to live,  
According to Your plan, O Creator, You can do all,  
According to Your plan, eternal and divine.  
With Your blessing, the fertile earth brings forth  
fruit;  
By Your holy word, You se a seal upon the barren.  
From one who gives birth, You can take away,  
And for the barren one, You can bring forth good  
fruit.  
You made fertile the barren Anna;  
You granted her a holy and noble daughter.  
That which was the subject of mockery, You  
crowned with glory;  
The dream of a childless woman You openly  
surpassed.  
The aged woman prayed; her prayer You accepted.  
The seal of barrenness You removed from her body;  
Her barren body You filled with life;  
You gave her a Virgin, wondrous in beauty,  
And a daughter was born, the Most-holy Virgin,  
A Daughter, a Mother, and the Mother of God!  
According to Your plan, O Creator, You can do all,  
According to Your plan, eternal and divine.

## *On Consumerism in Church*

*People like that say one thing, but something else is in their heart; on their tongue it is, "Lord, have mercy!" but inside, "Have me excused."*

– St. Theophan the Recluse

In Christianity, we constantly use familial themes: we call each other “brother” and “sister,” we call upon God as “Father,” we get together and partake from one Cup, after each service we sit down for a meal at the common table, we are taught to care for each other as one would for family... But do we adhere to these teachings? Do we think of our Church as our home, of God as our Father and of each other as a brother or a sister? Quite the opposite often appears to be true. In this age of individualized consumerism, we often treat our Church as a spiritual “supermarket.” We properly recognize that the Church offers us treasures, but instead of communing we consume. If our soul is alive and hungers for God, we come to Church more frequently; if it is on its way to atrophy, we do not feel much of a need and seldom come to Church; and if our soul does not require food any longer because it neither lives nor grows, we may find our way to Church once every few years, if ever. But when we do come, we act like shoppers, rather than children of the kingdom. As in a supermarket, we browse for what we need or like, we “sample,” we may smile at another “shopper” or ask a question at the “customer service desk.” We are untouched by the lives of others and we keep our own life private, hidden from other “shoppers.” We may even like the “store” enough to show up for a “sale” or a “promotion event,” but soon move on with our thoughts, our feelings, our life, with our “loaf of bread” in our shopping bag.

Our consumer-like behavior starts with the least noticeable things: we treat the very building of our church and its grounds as if they belonged to someone else. We see trash on the walkway—why pick it up? We see items out of order in the narthex—why bother? It is not ours, we do

not know where it belongs. Aren’t there people who work here? Isn’t there staff? “Clean up on isle 2!” This attitude of separation from the Church begins with benign things, but it enters our prayer and our very being. Our Father calls us to attend His Divine Feast. He calls us to the Holy Eucharist—we may come if it is not too inconvenient. Having received an invitation from our relatives to attend a family gathering or a celebration, we make arrangements, travel plans, feel bad if we cannot go due to circumstances beyond our control, call and apologize... But when God, our heavenly Father, calls us to His service, we think nothing of just not showing up. At best, we have reasons: “I have bought a piece of land... I have bought five yoke of oxen... I have a business... Have me excused” (Luke 14:18-19, Matthew 22-5).

If we don’t go “shopping” we think nothing of neglecting our serious obligation to support the church because we weren’t present and did not receive any product worth “paying” for.

Even when we are present at the Liturgy, we are absent from it. *Liturgia* by its very definition is “common work,” but we stand with a wall of our self-importance all around us, alone in a Church full of people, thinking private thought and praying private prayers. We watch the Liturgy, not taking part in it; we are consumers, not participants in a common work. We completely forget that the Church is not a concert or a spectacle, nor a neighborhood supermarket, it is the Body of the Living God, it is our home, the ark of our salvation, the ship which takes us to the calm harbor.

As in any living body, a member of the Body of Christ is either fully connected with all Its members and is nourished by the same Blood, or it is cut off and dead. A foot cannot be by

itself, choosing when to be in the body and when to leave because it is inconvenient, when to help the body walk, and when to say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body" (1 Cor. 12:15). In the same way, a member of Christ's Body is connected to the Whole by the Blood which runs through all Its members and is either fully living with and in the Body, or is cut off from It and is dead to It. Why is it so important to be in the Body rather than just near It? Because there is no "individual" salvation, alone, by yourself, in your own body. Because only Christ's Body and no other conquered death, only Christ's Body and no other ascended into heaven, and if are to have hope of salvation, we must be in that Body and no other.

So, how do we enter into the Body and stay in it? The Sacrament of our salvation is *Liturgia* or "common work," and we are to become co-laborers with God. The Holy Spirit draws us to the doors of the Church, Christ heals and restores us, the Father adopts us and gives us strength to be victorious in our struggle against sin. But we must answer the call of the Spirit and enter, we must preserve our baptismal garment unsoiled, we must also adopt God as our Father and His children as our brothers and sisters. We can start with small things: treat the church as our home and others as our family, try to show genuine interest, care, and love toward the lives of others, consider every church service as an invitation from the Father to a family feast and

be there if possible. And when you come, do your best to be a participator in the common work, not merely a spectator. These external things, even if done sometimes with effort, will internalize and undoubtedly reflect in our prayer: not "I came to the Liturgy," but "we came to the Liturgy"; not "I am praying," but "we are praying"; not "I am taking Communion," but "we are entering into Communion"; and not "I am being saved," but "the Body of Christ is being saved."

Of course, there is room for solitude in Christianity, for privacy, for lonely silence and for secluded prayer, but not at the core of it, not in the Liturgy and not in the Eucharist. Christ said, "where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). If we do not learn to be in the Body, to live in It in this temporal existence, how can we hope to spend eternity in It after we depart this world? And if we cannot learn to act like God's children in the physical matters, what hope do we have to suddenly one day transcend into the spiritual realm? Let us then gather together not in our names, but in God's, and let us celebrate the Divine Liturgy as our common work, let us be co-laborers with Christ and with one another, let us Commune with His Body and be connected by His Blood, because only in this can we have hope of salvation.

– adapted from article by Fr. Serhei  
September 2007

### ***SCHEDULE OF SERVICE FOR THE FEAST OF NATIVITY***

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 24 - VIGIL OF THE NATIVITY**

10:00 AM - Royal Hours

10:00 PM - *З Наму Бог!* "Велике Повечір'я" "God is with us" Great Complines

Followed by Divine Liturgy

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25 – THE NATIVITY IN THE FLESH OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST**

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners

## Varenyky Making

Please join us in the church hall, Monday morning, December 10 at 9:00 AM to make varenyky and holubtsy for next week's Christmas Bazaar.

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### ON THE WILL OF GOD AND ON FREEDOM

By St. Silouan of Mount Athos

The Holy Spirit sets us all on different paths: one man lives a life of silent solitude in the desert; another prays for mankind; still another is called to minister to Christ's flock, or to preach, or give comfort to the suffering; while yet another serves his neighbor by the fruits of his labor or by his goods – and all these are gifts of the Holy Spirit accorded in varying degrees: to some thirty-fold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

Many people think to themselves, "I have sinned much – plundered and killed, used violence, slandered and led a wanton life; and done many other wrong things." And shame keeps them from the path of repentance. But they forget that in God's sight all their sins are merely as drops of water in the sea.

O my brethren the world over, repent while there is still time. God mercifully awaits our repentance. And all heaven and all the Saints look for our repentance. As God is love, so the Holy Spirit in the Saints is love. Ask, and the Lord will forgive. And when you receive forgiveness, there will be joy and gladness in your soul, and the grace of the Holy Spirit will enter your soul...

We all suffer here on earth, and seek freedom, but few there are who know the meaning of freedom, and where it is to be found.

I, too, want freedom, and seek it day and night. I learned that freedom is with God and is given by God to humble hearts who have repented and sacrificed their wills before Him. To those who repent, the Lord gives His peace and the freedom to love Him. And there is nothing better in the world than to love God and one's fellow-man. In this does the soul find rest and joy

## *St. Nicholas Celebration*

Mark your Calendars! Next Sunday, December 16th we will welcome St. Nicholas on his annual visit to our parish:

- Following the Liturgy there will be a Potluck meal. \*\*\*Due to serious allergies among our fellow parishioners, please do NOT bring items with nuts (especially peanuts and walnuts) or mushrooms.\*\*\*
- Parents please note: «Небесна Канцелярія» (The Heavenly Office) will be open starting at 9:00 AM. Please see Pani Olena in the Pastor's Office. Please limit packages to 1 per child with a maximum value of \$25.00.



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### Greeting Cards

Christmas Cards and various other greeting cards are for sale in the Church Hall. Please see Mary Kitt to purchase.

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### *Men's Prayer Breakfast*

Sponsored by the Knights of Columbus

On Saturday, January 19th, our parish will host the monthly Men's Prayer Breakfast. It is open to all men.

The morning will start with an Akafist service followed by breakfast and a talk.

Men, please come and join with other Catholic men in fellowship.



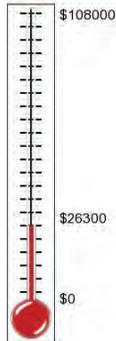
## Popcorn and a Movie with the Sisters

“Women of Spirit”, the untold story of the Sisters of St. Basil in America, will be shown at our parish on Sunday, January 27th after the Divine Liturgy. Sr. Ann Laszok will be in attendance to answer any questions that people might have. We invite everyone to come and celebrate this amazing story with the Sisters.

100 years ago, Bishop Soter Ortynsky, the first Eastern Catholic bishop to come to America, reached out to the Sisters of St. Basil in Yavoriv, Ukraine through Metropolitan Andrej Sheptytsky. Bishop Soter had a congregation of half a million people, and he needed help. “Women of Spirit” is the remarkable story of the 100 years of the Sisters of St. Basil, who answered the call and came to America to minister to the needs of thousands of faithful. Their struggles and challenges are recounted by many of the older Sisters who knew these early pioneers personally.

Interviews by former students, among whom are Bishops, priests, sisters, doctors, lawyers, and teachers, bring this amazing story to life. The documentary chronicles the Sisters’ story through a sequence of chapters, starting with Coming to America; Heeding the Call; Ground Breaking; Focus on Life-giving healing ministries; Rebirth of Ukraine; and concluding with Catechesis, Collaboration, and Church, as the Sisters enter their 2nd Century. Archival photos and videos underscore the influence the Sisters had on our Church in the USA and the world, and the crucial role they played in the rebirth of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Ukraine. Commentaries by Patriarch Sviatoslav and Patriarch Emeritus Lubomyr attest to the impact of the catechetical and academic education of thousands of children through the leadership of the Sisters. Humorous and deeply personal recollections add to the total beauty and warmth of the movie.

Plan to attend! For further information on the Popcorn and a Movie with the Sisters call Fr James at (619) 905-5278.



## 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 December 2

Amount	Number
\$10.00	2
\$15.00	1
\$20.00	1
\$30.00	1
\$40.00	2
\$50.00	2
\$60.00	2
\$75.00	1
\$100.00	1
\$125.00	1
\$500.00	1
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\$1185.00	15 Parishioners

Parishioner Total: \$1185.00

Average / parish household (40): \$28.21

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00

Shortfall: **(\$940.00)**

Christmas Flowers: \$30.00

### 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.

### 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).



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

**Pastor:** Fr. James Bankston  
[frjames@mac.com](mailto:frjames@mac.com)

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

*If Moses did not Take off his Shoes*

Moses was prevented from approaching the burning bush until he had taken off his shoes. You are aspiring to stand in the presence of the One who is greater than every thought and every passion. How then can you refuse to strip yourself of every passionate thought?

Praying means rejecting pleasures and banishing anger.

Do not open your heart to fleshly longings. They stir up emotions that trouble the eye of the mind and therefore destroy prayer.

Your prayer ought to be steadfast and fervent. So dispel all distractions and wandering thoughts the moment they present themselves. They disturb you and worry you so that your fervor is weakened.

During your prayer, try to keep your mind deaf and dumb. Only so will you be able to pray.

Do not be content with external attitudes of prayer. Turn your mind to the prayer of the spirit, with awe and fearfulness.

*St. Evagrius of Pontus*