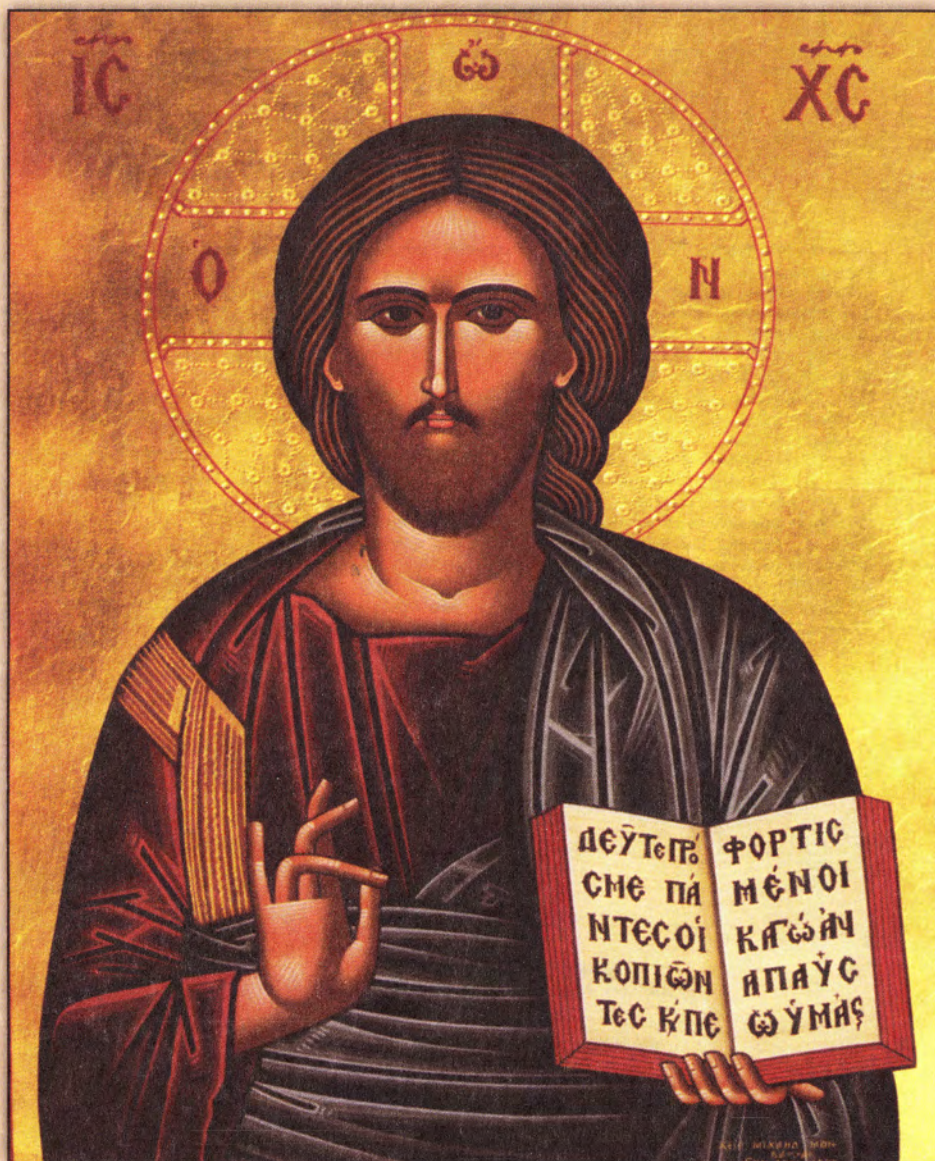


THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of Christ the Teacher



June 5, 2016

3RD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE PRIEST-MARTYR DOROTHEUS, BISHOP OF TYRE

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 6 – JUNE 12

SATURDAY, JUNE 11

6:00 PM – Great Vespers

SUNDAY, JUNE 12 – 4TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; OUR VENERABLE FATHER, ONUPHRIUS THE GREAT

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners

More than half a century ago, while I was still a child, I recall hearing a number of older people offer the following explanation for the great disasters that had befallen Eastern Europe: **Men have forgotten God; that's why all this has happened.**

Since then I have spent well-nigh fifty years working on the history of our Revolution; in the process I have read hundreds of books, collected hundreds of personal testimonies, and have already contributed eight volumes of my own toward the effort of clearing away the rubble left by that upheaval. But if I were asked today to formulate as concisely as possible the main cause of the ruinous Revolution that swallowed up some sixty million or more people, I could not put it more accurately than to repeat: **Men have forgotten God; that's why all this has happened.**

What is more, the events of the Communist Revolution can only be understood now, at the end of the century, against the background of what has since occurred in the rest of the world. What emerges here is a process of universal significance. And if I were called upon to identify briefly the principal trait of the entire twentieth century, here too, I would be unable to find anything more precise and pithy than to repeat once again: **Men have forgotten God.**

– Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn
The Temple on Address, 1983

PARISH MEETING

A date of June 26 has been set for a general meeting of the parish. This meeting will run from 12:00 noon until 1:30 PM.

Please plan to attend this important meeting.

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Parish Rummage Sale

There will be a rummage sale on Saturday, June 18 to benefit the parish. We are already accepting donations. Volunteers are needed. Please contact Olena Bankston at (619) 567-6967.



Haven't Seen Someone in a While?

Give them a call. See how they are doing. Let them know that you not only miss them but also care enough to see if everything is okay. A kind word can go a long way.

ST. BASIL AND THE Gnostic PHILOSOPHY OF TRANSGENDERISM
By G.D. ANDREANO

'Let the earth bring forth a living soul.' (Gen 1:24) Why did the earth produce a living soul? So that you may make a difference between the soul of cattle and that of man. You will soon learn how the human soul was formed; hear now about the soul of creatures devoid of reason. Since, according to Scripture, 'the life of every creature is in the blood,' as the blood when thickened changes into flesh, and flesh when corrupted decomposes into earth, so the soul of beasts is naturally an earthy substance. 'Let the earth bring forth a living soul.' See the affinity of the soul with blood, of blood with flesh, of flesh with earth; and remounting in an inverse sense from the earth to the flesh, from the flesh to the blood, from the blood to the soul, you will find that the soul of beasts is earth. Do not suppose that their soul is older than the essence of their body, nor that it survives the dissolution of the flesh. Avoid the nonsense of those arrogant philosophers who do not blush to liken their soul to that of a dog, and who say that they were once women, shrubs, or fish. Have they ever been fish? I don't know, but I'm not afraid to affirm that their writings show less sense than fish.'

—St. Basil the Great, (Hexaemeron, Homily VIII)

In his homilies on the six days of creation, St. Basil the Great takes a couple of detours to provide us with a defense against the various Gnostic doctrines of Manichaeism. There are two things in the above quote that are particularly noteworthy. The first thing to note is how St. Basil talks about the close relationship between the soul of a creature with the blood (Lev 17:11, 14), and the second thing to note is how he does not believe one could be anything other than what their physical bodies suggest.

In speaking primarily against the transmigration of the soul (reincarnation), St. Basil mocks the idea that any man was once a woman, or an animal, or a plant. According to St. Basil, our souls are not older than our bodies, nor are they ever inconsistent with our bodies. He would say there is no such thing as a “female soul” indwelling a male body, or vice versa. If a man were to “self-identify” as a woman, animal, or plant, then they may have a malfunction with their mental faculties.

The Pre-Op Dilemma

In recent days there have been a lot of articles and NPR programs about transgenderism ever since Target changed their restroom policy to allow anyone to use whatever restroom that corresponds to their “gender identity.” Because of this, the entirety of the United States is basically split into two groups of people who yell at each other without actually possessing arguments that correspond to the opposing belief system.

For example, the Conservatives will say something like, “Women shouldn’t be forced to allow men into their restrooms.” The Progressives will then reply, “You’ve already been sharing the restroom with transgender people.” These two arguments will be made until both sides are blue in the face, yet nobody ever explains what should be obvious. The Conservatives are talking about the “pre-op” transgender, and the Progressives are talking about the “post-op” transgender. If a woman were alone in the bathroom and in walks a post-op transgender person, obviously there wouldn’t be an issue because the person looks female, and there is nothing suspicious about a female entering a female restroom. However, if that same woman sees a pre-op transgender person walk in the restroom, she will immediately know a man just walked into the woman’s restroom.

In 2015, Planet Fitness removed one woman’s membership after she saw a man enter the woman’s locker room and complained about it. Imagine yourself in her shoes. What if you were a woman, alone and half-dressed, and you see a man enter the locker room. That is a scary and vulnerable moment, so it is understandable why she would be upset. Any woman with any real social awareness would have done the same thing, yet she was penalized for warning others about this revelation, and unfairly judged for prejudice.

The Transmigration Of The Gnostic

Gnosticism (with its foundation in Dualism) has historically taken many forms. The human being may be exempt from reincarnation, but heresy sure isn’t. Once you examine the philosophy of transgenderism, it doesn’t take long to see it is merely a reincarnated

form of Gnosticism. This isn't exactly surprising, since the Western world has grown increasingly Gnostic ever since the Enlightenment. Even our entire monetary system has devolved into a series of immaterial digits typed into a computer. It was only a matter of time before "gender" became no longer synonymous with "sex."

The real conversation shouldn't be about what bathrooms transgender individuals should use, because that isn't the root issue. The conversation needs to be about whether or not a subjective concept of gender even exists. Why doesn't CNN or FOX host televised philosophical debates about this topic? They host debates for presidential elections, which seem to be infinitely more mindless, yet they neglect all matters of substance. Why do people seem to allow a subjective and unverifiable means of self-identification go unchallenged? Civilized public discourse needs to become normative in our culture, because there is no other way to successfully examine and challenge an opposing philosophy. YouTube comments really confirmed that one.

Gender, as defined by the neo-Gnostics, does not exist. One cannot borrow the language of objective sex identification (Male/Female) to describe something that is in the realm of neither objectivity nor sex identification. How can a man claim he is a woman, when "woman" is objectively defined only by visible and verifiable analysis? If a man claims to be a woman, let him be asked what he thinks "woman" means. It is impossible to speak of such things without bringing anatomy into the conversation, because there is no "gender" beyond the physical body. There are natural complementary dualities of the universe (described in ancient China as "Yin" and "Yang") that are thought of as male and female, such as giving/receiving, planting/growing, heaven/earth, sun/moon, open/closed, etc. However, those terms (Male/Female) only have meaning as long as our physical bodies continue to exist the way they always have.

In other words, there would be no male or female without the frame of reference being a specific physical anatomy with a specific function.

The Role Vacuum

America seems to have been confused for a while now with regards to the nature of "man" and "woman." It wasn't long ago when a woman meant

not voting, not working, cooking, loving the color pink, and not being interested in sports or cars. A man used to mean sports, cars, alcohol, and being an contentious jerk. Then all of a sudden women started doing everything contrary to their former roles, and the men began to think that maybe there is more to being a man than watching football.

The former roles that the culture created were misguided and inaccurate from the start, so when the feminist movement came into existence, it created a cultural vacuum that left people (who used to classify gender based on "gender roles") unsure of how to objectively define gender. I believe this is why the definition of gender transformed into the subjective concept it is today. However, the reality is that the true meaning of gender should be synonymous with biological sex, and the burden of proof is on those who disagree.

The Response

Scripture says a man must not wear women's clothing (Deu 22:5), because God is the one who decides what is male and female, not us (Gen 1:27). We don't get to decide our gender anymore than we get to decide our biological parents. However, the problem is nonetheless a real one. There are real people who actually suffer from gender dysphoria, so how should Christians respond?

Well, we definitely shouldn't gather the family and obnoxiously march through the aisles of Target, yelling at people, with a bible raised high. We should instead express the love of Christ to all transgender people we meet, that God may restore in them the knowledge of their own value. At the same time, the federal government should not create laws that accommodate "pre-op" transgenderism in public bathrooms, because it is nonsensical to enforce a law that protects unverifiable statements.

Christians should actively pursue conversation and public discourse within the right context. Whether it be a civilized debate at a college, a thought-provoking blog post, or a personal conversation at a coffee shop, there is a right way to approach this issue. In all things, we must love our neighbor, even when we couldn't disagree more.

By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. (Jhn 13:35)

WHY DO WE NEED TO GO TO CONFESSION?

By Metropolitan Kallistos Ware

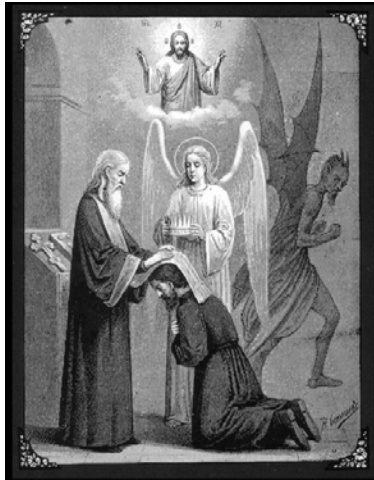
"Why do we need to go to confession? Is it not enough to confess our sins with sincerity in our private prayers each evening, will not God forgive us from the very moment that we confess our sins? Yes, as soon as we turn to God in true repentance He forgives us. God is always more ready to forgive than we to repent. Even the slightest turning of our heart will be blessed by God. Why then are we taught also to go to the sacrament of confession?

First: there are no private sins, all sins affect our brothers and sisters in Christ. All of our sins, however secret, have an effect on the community. If I feel in my heart anger towards someone else, even if I do not show it by word or action, that evil disposition in my heart has a destructive effect on others around. Every sin is a sin against the community; every sin however secret is a stumbling block for others and makes it harder for them to serve Christ. In the early Church confession was public. After the fourth century, with the growth of the Christian community, that gave scandal and so confession assumed its present form, as an opening of the heart before the priest alone, under conditions of secrecy. But let us remember that during confession the priest is there, among other things, as the representative of the community, of the people. The fact that we confess not just to God, but in the presence of a fellow man,

shows that we acknowledge the communal social dimension of all our sins. In confessing in his presence we are also asking forgiveness from the community.

Once before the Divine Liturgy St. John of San Francisco was hearing the confession of a man, and the man said: "Yes I know that what I have done is a sin, I ask God's forgiveness, but my heart is like a stone, I do not feel any sorrow for my sin, it is all just in my brain." So

St. John said to him: "Go out into the center of the church in front of the people and make a prostration before them and then come back to me." As the man did this and knelt to ask forgiveness from the people before him, something broke inside his heart and it came alive again. Suddenly he felt real compunction for what he had done. He said "now it is different," and the Archbishop gave him forgiveness. That



was the moment of turning for him because he acknowledged that his sin was a sin against the community and he asked their forgiveness. So in our confession let us first of all recall that dimension. We are also asking for forgiveness of our brothers and sisters for what we have done. That is one reason to go to confession, because sin is social.

Second: The spoken word, the uttered word has great force. This applies in two ways. First of all we listen to the spoken word of the priest, the council that he gives, and it may

be that what he says if written down and put in a book would not seem so striking. It may be that it wouldn't seem so remarkable. But in confession the priest is praying and we are praying for the light of the Holy Spirit, and he is addressing those words under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to each one of us, to each penitent personally. The words which looked at in the abstract might seem obvious, common place, can prove words of fire when we realize that they are being said to me personally here and now under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

At a convent in London many years ago there was a priest, Fr. John, who didn't much like hearing confessions, he didn't much like giving sermons either. He was a person of few words and very humble, and didn't feel he really had the authority to offer council in confession, but he was blessed by the bishop to hear confessions so he did so. On one occasion a woman was telling him at immense length of her quarrels with her husband: "I said this and he said this and I told him he was wrong and told him this" and so it went on "and I told him this and this." When she had finally stopped all Fr. John did was to turn to her and say "And did it help?" and then he gave her absolution. That came as a sudden revelation to her, the futility of the endless arguments she had with her husband, of her endless desire to prove that she was right and that he was wrong. Suddenly she saw that there was no point to all this, it was quite simply unnecessary and she stopped from that moment.

So the uttered word can have great power and that applies also to what you or I utter when we make our confession. Yes we can

confess our sins secretly in our evening prayers and we should do so, but when we come before the holy icons in church, when we have listened to the prayers and speak in the presence of the priest, when we have to say these things aloud, often then it becomes powerful, immediate, personally significant in a way it was not before.

The uttered word has great force and we find ourselves in confession, by God's grace, saying things that we never said in our private prayers. Suddenly we are able to understand more deeply and to express it more openly. Therein lies much of the grace of confession. The desert fathers say that a thought which is concealed has great power over us, but if we can find a way to bring it into the open and to speak of it, it loses its power. That is also what the modern psychiatrists tell us, but the desert fathers said it first! So, the uttered word that we bring in confession can have a sacramental force and a healing grace which will surprise us.

But then there is a third thing, not just what the priest does when he offers advice, not just what we do when we try to speak the truth in Christ. There is also what Christ does. Confession is a mystery of the Church that confers sacramental grace, there is power within it, Divine power. When the priest lays his hand upon our head in Confession, it is Christ who lays his hand upon us, Christ who forgives and that is certainly the deepest and most profound reason why we should go to Confession. When such grace and such healing is offered to us, who among us dare refuse to accept such an opportunity?"

“VIBRANT PARISH” PRAYER

O Lord Jesus Christ, our Good Shepherd, as you once gathered lost sheep that they might hear Your voice and be Your flock, so also today graciously look down from heaven upon our parish community, and send down on it Your Holy Spirit, that it might be a place to receive the joy of Your Good News. Strengthen us with Your presence, and always gather us together in prayer. Grant us the spirit of serving others, so that in our parish all might encounter You, the merciful God. Bless our spiritual leaders with Your wisdom, and inspire us to generously give of our time, talents and treasure for the building up on Your Kingdom. Unite us in peace and harmony, as befits Your community of love. Instill in us a missionary spirit, and let our parish community shine with the light of the Gospel, with prayer and good works, inviting all to share in the divine life, so that Your Name, O Savior, may be praised, together with Your eternal Father, and Your most-holy, good and life-giving Spirit. Amen.

Sunday offering for May 29

Amount	Number
\$15.00	3
\$18.00	1 (loose)
\$20.00	2
\$30.00	1
\$40.00	2
\$50.00	1
\$85.00	1
\$300.00	1
<hr/>	
\$648.00	

Parishioner Total: \$648.00

Average / parish household (42): \$8.31

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2200.00

Deficit: (\$1552.00)

Year-to-date deficit: (\$22,143.00)

PARISHIONERS THAT ARE HOME BOUND



If you or a loved one cannot make it to Church, Fr. James would be more than pleased visit at your home, in the hospital, at a nursing home, or any other place. It is no inconvenience at all.

Please be sure to schedule a visit.

Pastor:

Fr. James Bankston: (619) 905-5278

Pastoral Council:

Vladimir Bachynsky: (619) 865-1279

Mark Hartman: (619) 446-6357

Luke Miller: (858) 354-2008

Social Committee Chair:

Vacant

Finance Committee:

Bohdan Kniahynyckyj: (619) 303-9698



**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

Choked by Earthly Cares

Like man, this “great and honored being,” as he was called by Scripture, falling from his own worthiness like those who slip and fall into the mud and, having smeared themselves with mire, become unrecognizable even to their companions, so the one who falls into the mire of sin no longer is the image of the incorruptible God, and he is covered through sin with a corruptible and slimy form which reason advises him to reject. However, if, purged by the water, so to speak, of his way of life, the earthly covering can be stripped off, the beauty of the soul may reappear again. The rejection of what is alien means a return to what is proper and natural to oneself, but this is not possible to achieve, unless one be created anew. For, being like the divine is not our function, nor is it the product of human ability, but it is part of the generosity of God who freely, at the birth of the first man, gave our

nature a likeness to himself.

The human effort extends only to this: the removal of the filth which has accumulated through evil and the bringing to light again the beauty in the soul which we had covered over. It is such a dogma that I think the Lord is teaching in the Gospel to those who are able to hear wisdom when it is mysteriously spoken: “The kingdom of God is within you.” This saying shows, I believe, that the goodness of God is not separated from our nature, or far away from those who choose to seek it, but it is ever present in each individual, unknown, and forgotten when one is choked by the cares and pleasures of life, but discovered again when we turn our attention back to it.

St. Gregory of Nyssa

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