

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



*Icon of Saint Vladimir -- July 15th*



*July 12, 2015*

**7<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – TONE 6**

THE HOLY MARTYRS PROCLUS AND HILARION  
OUR VENERABLE FATHER MICHAEL OF MALEINUS

*SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 13 – JULY 19*

SUNDAY, JULY 19 – 8<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; OUR VENERABLE MOTHER MACRINA, SISTER OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT; OUR VENERABLE FATHER DIUS

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

For All Parishioners

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*If you are reading the bulletin during the Liturgy (including the homily),  
please **stop** and be attentive – будьмо уважні!*

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**Blessing of Automobiles**

**Sunday, July 19<sup>th</sup>**

It is a custom of Eastern Christians to have their cars blessed both when newly acquired and on or near the feast of the Prophet Elias (July 20<sup>th</sup>), as he ascended into heaven on a fiery chariot. The blessing will take place immediately after the Divine Liturgy next Sunday.

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**Fr. James will be away...**

Fr. James will be out of town from 7/20/15 through 8/14/15. In case of an emergency please contact either Fr. Brian Escobedo of Holy Angels Byzantine Catholic Church at (858) 277-2511 or (661) 800-8383, Fr. James Babcock at (714) 600-3660, or Fr. Ihor Koshyk at (323) 663-6307.

During Fr. James' absence Divine Liturgy will be at 12:00 Noon and will be served by Fr. Brian Escobedo, pastor of Holy Angels.

There will be **NO** Divine Liturgy for the Transfiguration (8/6) but you are encouraged to attend Holy Angels at 7:00 PM on August 5th (Vespertine Liturgy) or 9:00 AM on August 6th. Fruit will be blessed at both services at Holy Angels.

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***Refinancing of the Church***

As discussed at the parish meeting last week, the process of refinancing the church is underway. A very important aspect of the application is demonstrating to the lender that the parish community have committed adequate financial support. **Please fill out your pledge form as soon as possible.**

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**THE HEALTH CLUB**

Successful membership in a health club requires exercise.

Health clubs make much of their profit from people who decide to join because they want to get in shape, but after a few sessions with the weights, drop out. Membership in the Church, like the health club, requires that we put effort into it, lest we find ourselves dropping out for lack of spiritual growth.

Working out with weights does little for our overall health if we limit our time in the gym to an hour a week. Building muscular fitness takes effort, commitment and time. Building a healthy relationship with God requires effort, commitment and time. Like building up a healthy body, the health of the soul requires attention and commitment on our part. The end result is well worth the effort.

*Love in Christ,  
Abbot Tryphon*



## ATTRIBUTES OF THE PERFECT CHURCH

By VRev. Vladimir Berzonsky

*“One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, ‘Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb’” (Revelation 21 :9)*

Here we are near the end of the Bible in the Revelation experience. Is it not odd that one of the angels the seven bowls with the seven last plagues is here inviting us to witness the glorious marriage of the Lamb whom we know to be our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ as the bridegroom? Also to recognize that the bride is none other than the holy Church all dressed in radiant white, symbol of purity and innocence? It tells us about angels. They are as their name implies, “sent” as messengers by the Holy Trinity to humanity. An angel like this brought the reader to the vision of the destruction of the great harlot, Babylon. Here the angel is announcing the glorious wedding of the Lamb of God and the Bride, the holy Church that the Lord bought with the great price of His Cross. The Bride-Church is a symbol of all who have the following attributes of unblemished flawless virtues radiating from their souls.

St. Paul set forth the attributes of the perfect Church. In Revelation those who dwell in such a Church are among those in the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven to belong to Christ the Lamb of God who comes to claim His bride. From the apostle to the gentiles, we find characteristics: They are people who are **devoted to one another**: “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.” [Romans 21:10] When we read this, how does it resonate on the conscience of each member of the community we call Church?

These are people who can say of their fellow parishioners that they: **“Honor one another above themselves.”** [Romans 12:10] It means that each member in good standing holds all others in the congregation above themselves. They feel it an honor to be part of such a community of believers. Does this really happen?

It’s mandatory to dwell in harmony with one another: **“Live in harmony with one another.”** [Romans 12:16] It means that nothing is as important as to preserve peace among the family of Christ. Of course there are differences of

opinion in the parish – everybody understands that – but they also realize that without the peace of God that passes all understanding, their Eucharist is hollow because their relations are shallow and worldly, not godly.

**Love one another**: “Let no debt remain outstanding except the debt to love one another.” [Romans 13:8] Until we can realize the order from the Divine Liturgy: “Let us love one another that with one accord we may confess ... Father, Son and Holy Spirit...” as Jesus said, we are talking nonsense when we say we love God. Here the expectation is that by the time we approach heaven, we have made love a way of life.

**Accept one another**: “Accept then one another, just as Jesus accepted you.” [Romans 15:7] To accept is to realize there are differences, and yet they do not prevent us from forgiving. The French say: To understand is to forgive. Acceptance is not approval – not even tolerance. It is compassion.

**Serve one another**: “You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge in sinful nature. Rather serve one another in love.” [Galatians 5:13] Is this not the meaning of foot washing? What more powerful an example can there be than the Son of God washing the feet of fishermen? Are we above the Master?

**Forgive one another**: “Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” [Colossians 3:13] You will be stopped and forbidden entry into heaven if you come with a grudge defiling your soul.

**Encourage one another**: “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.” [1 Thessalonians 5:11] We are ordered to build up the confidence and to reinforce the positive images of all your sisters and brothers in Christ. **There’s no place for a downer or defeatist in Paradise.**

# HAVE YOU LOST YOUR SOUL?

Fr. Stephen Freeman

When was the last time you heard someone express concern for their soul? When was the last time you listened earnestly as a friend lamented a psychological or emotional struggle? The reason for the difference is simple: **we have become a “soul-less” psychologized society.** The classical concern for the soul has been replaced by an overwhelming interest in psychological and emotional “health.” We are becoming a “well-adjusted” society.

The soul has always been something of a mystery. In Greek, soul (*psyche*) simply means the “life” of a person. *Psyche* is derived from a word that meant “to cool” or “to blow,” and had a meaning similar to spirit (*pneuma*) which meant “breath” or “wind.” A body that no longer had breath was no longer alive. In Genesis, God breathed into Adam, and “he became a living soul” (*nephesh*).

The psychologized self is a very modern concept. Freud’s foundational work only appeared at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries. His concepts swept into the popular culture after the First World War (1918). The “Roaring 20’s” saw a fascination with Freud’s psychological narrative. His suggestion that moral (sexual) inhibitions were possibly “dangerous and unhealthy” were especially popular. It was a decade that witnessed the first blush of the coming sexual revolution.

Modern, psychologized people are enthralled with themselves. We analyze, categorize, type and treat every aspect of the self that can be identified. “Self help” is our generic term for arm-chair psychology. And like its Freudian predecessor, the goal of the psychologized self is a vaguely perceived state called “health.”

Contemporary Christianity has taken up this world-view and adapted the gospel to its requirements. The various versions of the prosperity gospel all presume a psychologized world-view. And even popular evangelical Churches presume that a born-again life will be a happier life. Jesus has become a means to a healthier self.

The psychologized self includes our modern fascination with “how I’m doing.” Thus reports that “I’m doing better” in confession may be completely beside the point. “Is it well with my soul?” would be a more apt question. And the soul might be doing extremely well while we outwardly struggle with anger, frustration, temptation, and failure.

*Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2Co 4:16-18 )*

**Saints are not necessarily “well-adjusted” people.**

The psychologized self is uniquely suited to our consumer culture – indeed it might even be rightly described as the “consumer-self.” Just as we shop for our comforts and pleasure, so we “shop” for the self and the latest version of its “health.” I offer no complaint here for the work that has been done to relieve mental suffering. Such relief, however, should not come at the price of our souls. The modern self is a poor substitute for the classical soul.

So what is the soul?

The soul is our life. It is immaterial, and yet it is everywhere within us. St. Gregory of Nyssa offers this definition: “The soul is a noetic essence that imparts to the organic body the force of life by which the senses operate.” Our life is more than a description of the aggregate metabolic processes of our cells. The soul, our life, carries our meaning and purpose and reason for existence.

Much of what we describe as personality and upon which we lavish such interest and care, is itself largely the work of the body. It is subject to medication and alteration, even disappearing

in the face of certain conditions. Memory and desire and our “style” of interaction are not our identity nor our life. My brain might have ADHD but this does not touch the soul. The brain is an instrument through which the soul expresses itself (in the words of a modern Athonite elder), but the brain and its artifacts are not the soul itself.

I have found it interesting to reflect on the experience of persons who have undergone great suffering for the faith – and their witness to the nature of the soul. One notable example is given in the writings and conversations of Fr. Roman Braga, a Romanian monastic who spent over 10 years in Communist prisons, some of which were marked by extreme torture and psychological pressures. He said:

*Not having anywhere to go, or even the possibility of looking out a window because there were no windows in those cells of solitary confinement, you had to look, to go somewhere. And so you go inside yourself—inside your heart and your mind—to examine yourself, to see who you are and why God brought you into this world. You questioned whether God even exists, and wondered about your relationship with God.*

*When we were free, we did not have time to ask ourselves these questions. Our faith was superficial, because you can learn a lot of things and can have a mind like an Encyclopedia, full of all knowledge, but if you don't know yourself and who you are, even if you know everything in the world, you are superficial if you don't ask “Why do I exist?” and “What is the destiny of my life?” and “Why did God create me?” and, “If I believe in God what does God want from me?”*

Such questions, particularly asked in the apparent dead-end of a hostile solitary confinement, can produce deep madness. Or, as in the case of Fr. Roman, they can yield true knowledge of the soul and reveal the wonder of existence.

The question, “Why do I exist?” cannot be answered with the superficial answers of personality. What is the personality in a solitary cell?

These questions direct our attention towards the soul itself. When St. Gregory writes about the soul, he begins with an “apophatic” approach, recognizing from the beginning that it belongs, like God, to things that cannot be known by pure rational observation. To ask the question, “Why do I exist?” brings us first to silence and mystery.

That silence is the preferred sound of the soul. The noise of the mind is the chatter of distraction. When the Fathers speak of the mind with regard to the soul, they name it “the *nous*.” The fact that this was translated into Latin as *intellectus* is part of the sad history of its loss from our awareness. The *nous* certainly knows and perceives, but not in the manner of intellect. It wills (or is aware of willing), but not in the manner of choice.

Such a description is frustrating to the modern mind, for we want to observe, weigh, measure and compare. We even doubt that there is such a thing as a soul, or whether it is just a name being given to something else, some other aspect of the brain. What we want of the soul is self-awareness – we require a selfie of the soul – the ultimate reassurance of the modern world.

The soul is created for the awareness of God and its attention is properly directed towards Him, not towards itself. We become more clearly aware of the *nous* when we enter into true prayer, when we are aware of God. Self-awareness in the *nous* is found in repentance, when we “return to ourselves.” True repentance is not a matter of feeling bad over something we have done, a sorrow that may simply be confined to our emotions. It is instead a profound awareness that apart from God we are nothing. The monastic tradition calls this the “remembrance of death.” It is the soul’s knowledge of its true condition. And it is in that condition that the soul’s desire is turned to God. There is a hymn sung early in Great Lent that points us in this direction:

*My soul, my soul, arise.  
Why are you sleeping?  
The end is drawing near,  
and you will be confounded.  
Awake, therefore, that you may be spared by  
Christ God,  
Who is everywhere present and fills all things.*

The soul is our life and is the proper anchor of our existence. The consumer-self is ill-equipped for true existence. The loss of choices and its incipient narcissism plunge the consumer-self into despair. People in the modern world often shop in order to treat their depression.

But the soul is our true life. It is only in the soul the the inherent suffering of the world makes sense. The consumer-self cannot bear suffering and supports every false hope that promises relief from suffering. But listen again to Fr. Roman:

*Suffering is good not only for Christians but for everybody. Because if you do not suffer you do not understand anything. Suffering is a good experience.*

This statement comes from a man who was subjected to a prison regime that Alexander Solzhenitsyn described as the “most terrible act of barbarism in the contemporary world.”

Christ Himself specifically states that the salvation of the soul entails suffering. He tells those who would follow Him that they must “take up their cross.” This is not a description of the road to self-fulfillment – it is the path of self-emptying.

The modern world has lost its soul. Fortunately, there is always enough suffering ready at hand to help us find it.

***Awake, my soul.***

*Fr. Stephen Freeman*

*Glory to God for All Things*

*03 / 07 / 2015*

## **1-666-FIXURBIBLE**

*adapted from Matthew Archbold*

Are you tired of reading passages from the Bible that shock you? Don't you think that sometimes the Word of God can seem a little...outdated? Aren't you weary of being offended by certain things Jesus said?

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## A Note on Kneeling

Now that Pentecost has past, kneeling is no longer forbidden for weekday Liturgical Services. Kneeling is reintroduced into the **weekday** Liturgical services with the Kneeling Prayers (which technically are part of Vespers for Monday.) Kneeling is **still prohibited for all Sundays**. "Because kneeling is a sign of penance in the Eastern tradition, the faithful should be discouraged from kneeling during the Paschal Season and on **all** Sundays of the year. The faithful should be properly instructed as to the reasons why kneeling at these times is not congruent with the theology of the Eastern Churches." (Art. 464 § 1 – *Pastoral Guide of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the USA.*)

### Sunday offering for July 5

Amount	Number
\$15.00	2
\$20.00	1
\$30.00	1
\$40.00	4
\$50.00	3
\$85.00	1
\$150.00	1
\$400.00	1
\$1000.00	1
<hr/>	
\$2025.00	

Parishioner Total: \$1985.00

Visitor Total: \$40.00

Average / parish household (42): \$13.05

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2200.00

**Deficit: (\$140.00)**

**Year-to-date deficit: \$26550.00**

### 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.

## Roof Campaign



The hall roof is in dire need of repair. There are at least six separate leaks. Numerous patch jobs have failed to solve the problems. The current drought has minimized the problem but we continue to pray for rain anyway. There is good news and bad news: The good news is - we have the money; the bad news is - it's still in your pockets. We will be soliciting quotes for repairs soon. Know a roofer you would recommend?

### Roof Repair Challenge

An anonymous donor has given \$1000.00 towards the repair of the hall roof. The donor has challenged the rest of the parish to contribute to this cause so that the roof can be fully repaired rather than patched.

Roof Challenge Response: \$2790.00  
Total: \$3790.00

#### Pastor:

Fr. James Bankston: (619) 905-5278

#### Pastoral Council:

Vladimir Bachynsky: (619) 865-1279

Mark Hartman: (619) 446-6357

Luke Miller: (858) 354-2008

Jeanine Soucie: (718) 674-4529

#### Social Committee Chairperson:

Megan Hartman (619) 540-4291

#### Finance Committee:

Bohdan Knianicky: (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](http://stjohnthebaptizer.org)

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

***How We Are Loved by the Father***

The kindhearted God gives us what we ask for not because of our prayers; rather does He nourish us according to His compassion, for it is He who created us. Without our asking, the Supreme Majesty granted us His own Son who for our sake appeared on earth and, although we did not ask Him to do so, He offered Himself as a sacrifice for our salvation. For who asked the Father to give His own Son up to death on the cross? Or who entreated the Son to die for sinners? To which righteous man did the thought occur to ask the Father to give up His Son for transgressors? It is truly an unprecedented event, and the thought occurred to no one. The Father gave up His Son to death on the cross, and through His death sinners obtained life. And if He gave away His greatest treasure, can there be any obstacle to prevent a man who asks such a Lover of mankind from receiving all that he needs? So let us ask Him, for He does give. Let us announce to Him our wishes, for He will not refuse us. Let us entreat Him, for He wants to satisfy our needs in every possible way. But in accordance

with His justice, He expects our prayer to come to His door, and this prayer has reconciled justice and sinners. If kindness were to forgive transgressions without prayer, it would be a violation of justice, and no one would contemplate justice any more. Mankind would gradually be given up to lawlessness, for the Judge would fail to apply the staff of correction. Each person would joyfully continue to sin, for there would be no one to correct him. Such kindness, however beneficial it might be for us, would soon turn to harm, for it would give sinners cause to ever multiply their sins. And it is a good thing that in the world also, justice prompts the use of punishment. For punishment causes the sinner to shudder and put an end to his sinful ways. It brings the sinner to contrition of heart, for it is he who has brought punishment upon himself. And thus the sinner puts aside his iniquities, if only for a short while, and seeks forgiveness for his sins.

*St. Ephrem the Syrian*

**For more information on Eastern spirituality, visit  
[www.ecpubs.com](http://www.ecpubs.com)**