

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



*Icon of Saint Christina -- July 24th*



# July 24, 2016

## 10<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST - TONE 1

THE HOLY PASSION-BEARERS BORYS AND HLIB, NAMED IN BAPTISM ROMAN AND DAVID  
THE HOLY MARTYR CHRISTINA OF TYRE

**SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 25 – JULY 31**

PLEASE NOTE: There will be **NO** vespers during the Summer months unless noted in the bulletin.

SUNDAY, JULY 31 – 11<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; THE HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS EUDOCIMUS OF CAPPADOCIA  
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners

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### Secularized Sin

Fr. Stephen Freeman

I have had numerous responses across social media about yesterday's (*see last week's bulletin*) article on sin. Its title, "*Sin Is Not a Legal Problem*," drew some strong reactions. A particular concern is worth thinking about carefully. There is, as many have pointed out, plenty of juridical language in both the Scriptures and in the liturgical tradition of the Church. Quite specifically, someone noted that 1John 3:4 has this: "Sin is lawlessness." One translation that I was confronted with had it: "Sin is illegality." What can be said of this? Have I made a point that denies both the Scriptures and the Tradition?

There is no argument about the use of juridical language. However, such language in our modern usage tends to be read in a highly modern manner. It takes us into the realm of our secularized world, where ideas and psychology are the only realities between people. The language of Scripture and Tradition has a world-view in which law, legality, justice, and the like, have a concrete content, and are not simply relational abstractions. And this changes everything.

When the Fathers used the word "**symbol**," they understood that something was actually, **really and truly made present**. A symbol makes present that which it represents. This is fundamental in the doctrine of the Holy Icons. In our **modern** world, a symbol represents something that is **not there, it is a sign of absence**. Indeed, because our modern world-view is essentially one of nominalism, we believe that the ancient notion of symbol is simply impossible. It feels like superstition to the modern consciousness.

However, as moderns, we have a very strong sense of *psychological* realities. In the same manner, we have a very strong sense of legal and social obligations. These seem to be abstractions to us, a network of responsibilities with requirements and consequences. But we do not think of these obligations as having an actual substance. They are how we think and feel, or how we should think and feel. But none of this disturbs our fundamental world-view that we are utterly distinct individuals in a material world in which only abstract associations connect us.

Modern marriage is a good example. Contemporary culture believes that the relationship of marriage is essentially a psychological agreement, the result of a choice and a willingness to cooperate. However, the language of the Church is that of union. We say that the "two become one flesh." For the modern consciousness, such language can only be understood as a metaphor, a beautiful way of expressing a psychological or legal "relationship." For the Church, such language is quite real and concrete. They truly become one flesh. This difference between the ancient Church and contemporary consciousness explains the present development of same-sex "unions." Contemporary Christianity very weakly responded to the demands for same-sex marriage with legal imagery: "it is against God's law." And this only meant, "God does not like this." Nothing stronger could be said. The argument based on marriage as a union has no standing in a culture whose worldview is grounded in nominalism.

And so we come to the use of legal and forensic imagery in theology and doctrine. The Biblical and Traditional use of this language has everything in common with the Church's understanding of marriage. The commandments are not an abstraction, a statement of preferred obligations, regulated by reward and punishment. They have substance. Indeed, if we understand them correctly, they are nothing less than the divine energies.

Someone shared a wonderful passage from St. Justin Popovich on 1John 3:4. It illustrates my point quite well:

*Sin defiles man and his being, which is in the divine image of God and God-given. It is the fundamental impurity, proto-impurity, and the origin of all impurities. Purity is, in reality, purity from sin and its impurities. That is holiness. For only through the help of the holy energies, which are received through the Holy Mysteries and holy virtues, is man able keep himself from sin. For such purity, such holy purity, is the divine law of man's being. This purity is achieved and maintained by living in goodness, in love, in prayer, in righteousness, in meekness, in fasting, in self-restraint, and in the rest of virtues of the Gospel—simply put, in holiness, conceived of as the synthesis and unity of all the holy virtues and grace-filled energies. In opposition to purity, to holiness as law, to the divine law of man's being, stands sin as the first and fundamental lawlessness.... In sinning, man breaks all of God's laws and brings about lawlessness, and through lawlessness comes anarchy, disorder, and chaos. Sin is the transgression of the law, it is transgression of the law of God. The law is from God, while lawlessness is from the devil.*

If, in a modern context, we say that sin defiles someone, a person who hears us only hears a psychological reality. It means nothing more than that someone thinks that person is defiled. It is one of the reasons that traditional Christian language is being labeled as “**hate speech**.” If I say that something is an

abomination, all that is heard is that I think it is an abomination. Many have taken this same mode of understanding and imported it into their Christian consciousness. They believe that something defiles someone, because God thinks it defiles someone. The defilement only exists in the mind of God. God is just one more psychological actor in a universe of relationships.

But this brings us to my description of sin as not being a “legal problem.” St. Justin says that “sin defiles a man and his being.” This is not contemporary language. He means exactly what he is saying. It is of a piece with St. Athanasius' description of sin as death, corruption and non-being. **Sin is something, not just a thought in the mind of God. It kills us, and not because God is doing the killing. Sin is death itself.** The “lawlessness” of 1John 3:4 is the anarchy, chaos, and disorder of death and corruption. Sin is utterly contrary to the life that is the gift of God.

This is why St. Justin (and the Church) can say that the remedy of sin is holiness, the “synthesis and unity of all the holy virtues and grace-filled energies.” When we partake of the holy mysteries of Christ's Body and Blood, they “cleanse us from all sin.” This is not a simple change of our status in the mind of God. His Body and Blood are life. They are the antidote to death, decay, corruption and non-being. They destroy the lawlessness that is the anarchy, chaos and disorder of death and corruption.

In point of fact, I have no problem with juridical language, nor should any of us, so long as it is understood in a manner free from the nominalism of modernity. I have used the word “legal” to describe this hollow notion of psychologized abstractions. That is all the word “legal” means in our modern vocabulary. If we speak with one voice, the same voice of the sacraments, the holy icons, and the dogma of our faith, then our use of juridical language will be rescued from the ash heap of modernity. However, contemporary thought forms are very deeply engrained. We do well to take care with them.



## „МИ, РІД ВІРНИЙ...”

Приближалися часи терпінь і смерті Ісуса Христа. постоли були засмучені і розгублені. Щоб додати їм відваги і віри, Ісус переображується перед ними на Горі Тавор, показавши Себе в світлі Божественної слави.

А тим часом внизу, під горою, панувало занепокоєння. Апостоли не могли оздоровити юнакаепілептика. Ісус, зійшовши з гори, оздоровив його. На запитання апостолів, чому вони не могли його оздоровити, Ісус відповів їм: *„Через вашу малу віру.”* При цьому Він хвилювався і дорікав: *„Роде невірний і розбещений, доки Я маю бути з вами?”* Ісус характеризує віру такими словами, які звучать для нас неймовірно: *„Істинно кажу вам, коли матимете віру, як зерно гірчиці, скажете цій горі перенестися звідси туди — і вона перенесеться, і нічого не буде для вас неможливого.”* Так сказав Ісус, бо бачив недовіру апостолів.

Виникає запитання: „Якою є наша віра? Що значить вірити?” ристиянський катехизм навчає нас: „Вірити, значить, приймати за правду все те, що Господь Бог об’явив і Свята Церква навчає”. Правди християнської віри є Богом об’явлені. Деяких правд людина не в змозі зрозуміти навіть після їх відкриття Богом. Тому їх просто треба приймати ЯК ДОГМУ, на віру. Пригадаймо, що Ісус Христос ніякої іншої чесноти не домагався так, як віри, ніякої іншої чесноти не хвалив так, як віру і за ніяку іншу хибу не дорікав так, як за невірство.

Віра — це точка, у якій людина зустрічається з Богом, або розходиться, залежно від того, чи вона вірить, чи не вірить. Жива віра — це життя вповні узгоджене з правдами віри; як віриш — так і стараєшся жити! Святий апостол Павло пише: *„Багато разів і різними способами говорив Бог, давно через пророків до отців, а в ці останні дні говорив до нас через Сина.”* (Євр. 1, 1). І тепер промовляє до нас у святих храмах через Святе Євангеліє. Господь Бог ніколи не перестає говорити до людей, до кожного зокрема. Бо, **чим є сумління** в душі кожного із нас? **Божим голосом**, який каже, що є добре, а що зле; радить і застерігає; хвалить і докоряє. Що ще нам потрібно, щоб **вірити**???

Хто відкидає Божі правди, робить це для того, щоб звільнити себе від обов’язків, які накладає віра. В житті — це вигідно йому. Але яким буде кінцевий результат з такого „вигідного” життя, прожитого для себе і за своїми законами? Ще не було такої людини, яка закінчуючи життя, шкодувала б про те, що жила по-християнськи. А скільки було таких, які відходячи — гірко каюлися, що вони в житті не служили Богові, на суд до якого відходять. Амінь.

## “WE ARE A BELIEVING PEOPLE...”

The time of suffering and death of Jesus Christ were fast approaching. The apostles were sad and confused. In order to give them courage and faith, Jesus is transfigured before them on the Mount of Tabor, showing Himself in the light of God's glory.

At the same time, at the foot of the mountain, panic reigned. The apostles could not cure a young man afflicted with epilepsy. Jesus, coming down from the mountain, cured him. Later, the apostles asked Jesus in private why they could not cure the young man. Jesus answered them: *“Because you have so little trust.”* Jesus then continued: *“What an unbelieving and perverse lot you are! How long must I remain with you?”* Jesus explained faith in words that echo to us through the ages: *“I assure you, if you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you would be able to say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it would move. Nothing would be impossible for you.”* Jesus spoke in this manner because He saw the lack of faith in the apostles.

The question arises: “What is our faith like? What does it mean to believe?” Christian catechism teaches us: “To believe means to accept as truth all which the Lord God has revealed and the Holy Church teaches.” The truths of Christian faith are revealed by God. Some truths an individual cannot understand even when God explains them. Therefore, simply, we must accept them **as dogma**, on faith. Let us remember that Jesus Christ did not stress any other truth as much as faith. He did not praise any other truth as much as faith and He condemned nothing as much as faithlessness.

Faith is a point at which the individual aligns with God or rejects Him, depending on whether he or she believes or does not believe. Living faith is a life lived in accordance with the truths of faith. The manner in which you believe determines the manner in which you strive to live your life!

The holy apostle Paul writes: *“In times past, God spoke in fragmentary and varied ways to our fathers through the prophets; in this, the final age, He has spoken to us through His Son.”* (Hebrews 1, 1). And now He speaks to us in churches through the Holy Gospels. The Lord God will never stop speaking to His people, to each individually. Think, **what is conscience** in each of our souls? It is the **voice of God** telling us what is right and what is wrong; advising and warning; praising and reproaching. What more do we need **in order to believe???**

Those who reject God's truths do so to free themselves from the responsibilities which faith brings. This is convenient for them. But, what will be the final result of this “convenient” life, lived for oneself and according to one's own commandments? There has not been one person, laying on their deathbed, who regrets living a Christian life. But, there are many who regret that, in life, they did not serve God, as they face His final judgment. Amen.

We are in the process of forming the following committees: Pastoral, Finance, Stewardship, and Social. Council members: must be 18 years old or older; must be a Catholic in good standing; would be required to attend one monthly Council meeting. It is hoped that membership of all four Councils will be determined by the end of July. Since membership on any of these committees places one in a leadership role, it carries with it a responsibility of currently being an active committed parishioner.

### ПРИГАДУЄМО УСІМ ПАРАФІЯНАМ

*Щоб гідно приймати Святі Тайни парафіянин повинен жити за правилами віри та поважно підготуватися. Добрі (віддані) парафіяни є ті котрі:*

1. В неділі й свята беруть участь в Святій Літургії
2. Знають загальні правди й молитви нашої віри
3. Записані до парафії
4. Жертвують час, таланти і матеріально підтримують парафію і заповнили щорічне заповнення пожертви

### A REMINDER TO ALL PARISHIONERS

*Reception of the Sacraments requires the committed practice of the faith and serious preparation. Committed parishioners are those who:*

1. Attend Divine Liturgy on all Sundays and Feast Days
2. Know and understand the basic prayers and tenets of our faith
3. Have enrolled in the parish
4. Give of their time, talents and financial resources and have filled out the annual pledge form

### **WHAT IS A FIRST-PORTION GIVER?**

A First-Portion Giver is a believer who offers a first-portion of his time, talent, and financial resources out of grateful recognition of the fact that all he has, he holds in trust from God.



**TIME**

A First Portion Giver offers a first portion of his *time*.

“Let us spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing. But let us encourage one another...”

Hebrews 10:24-25



**TALENT**

A First Portion Giver offers a first portion of his *talent*.

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.”

1 Corinthians 12:4-6



**RESOURCES**

A First Portion Giver offers a first portion of his *treasure*.

“Concerning the collection for the saints..., on the first day of the week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in proportion to the income God has given you...”

1 Corinthians 16:2

## EPARCHIAL SOBOR

On September 24, there will be an Eparchial Sobor (gathering) held in Chicago at the Cenacle Retreat House. Bishop Bohdan Danylo from Parma will be presiding. The subject will be the "Vibrant Parish" program established by Patriarch Sviatoslav for the entire Church. Each parish must send 2 lay representatives along with the pastor. Cost includes airfare and a 1 night stay (\$105.00 per person) at the Cenacle

Between now and Mid-September there will be a special collection taken at each Sunday Liturgy to raise funds for this very important event. Please be generous!

*Spiritual death happens  
one compromise  
at a time.*

*Love sinners, but hate their  
deeds. Do not be angry at  
anyone and do not foster  
hatred for the sinner, for we  
are all guilty. Hate his sins, and  
pray for him, so that you may  
be made like unto Christ, who  
had no dislike for sinners, but  
prayed for them.*

*– St. Isaac the Syrian*

## Sunday offering for July 17

Amount	Number
\$15.00	1
\$20.00	5
\$25.00	1
\$40.00	3
\$46.00	1 (loose)
\$50.00	1
\$85.00	1
\$400.00	1
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\$841.00	

Parishioner Total: \$821.00

Visitors: \$20.00

Average / parish household (42): \$10.53

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2200.00

**Deficit: (\$1379.00)**

**Year-to-date deficit: (\$30,451.00)**

Special Collection for Eparchial Sobor: \$54.00

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

**Pastor:** Fr. James Bankston  
[frjames@mac.com](mailto:frjames@mac.com)  
Fr. James' cell phone: (619) 905-5278

***A Reflection***

Holy Job is a type of the Church. At one time he speaks for the body, at another for the head. As he speaks of its members he is suddenly caught up to speak in the name of their head. So it is here, where he says: I have suffered this without sin on my hands, for my prayer to God was pure.

Christ suffered without sin on His hands, for He committed no sin and deceit was not found on His lips. Yet He suffered the pain of the cross for our redemption. His prayer to God was pure, His alone out of all mankind, for in the midst of His suffering He prayed for His persecutors: Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing. Is it possible to offer, or even to imagine, a purer kind of prayer than that which shows mercy to one's torturers by making intercession for them? ...

Notice what follows: Do not let my cry find a hiding place in you. The blood that is drunk,

the blood of redemption, is itself the cry of our Redeemer. Paul speaks of the sprinkled blood that calls out more eloquently than Abel's. Of Abel's blood Scripture had written: The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the earth. The blood of Jesus calls out more eloquently than Abel's, for the blood of Abel asked for the death of Cain, the fratricide, while the blood of the Lord has asked for, and obtained, life for His persecutors.

If the sacrament of the Lord's passion is to work its effect in us, we must imitate what we receive and proclaim to mankind what we receive. The cry of the Lord finds a hiding place in us if our lips fail to speak of this, though our hearts believe in it.

*St. Gregory the Great*

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