

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
THIRTEENTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW



*Icon of Saints Mammas and John -- September 2nd*

# ***September 2, 2012***

## ***FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST***

*THE HOLY MARTYR MAMAS; OUR VENERABLE FATHER JOHN THE FASTER, PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

### ***TONE 5***

#### **SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 3 – SEPTEMBER 9**

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8 – *THE NATIVITY OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS*

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

Health & Blessings for Nadia Adams; Req: Michael Adams

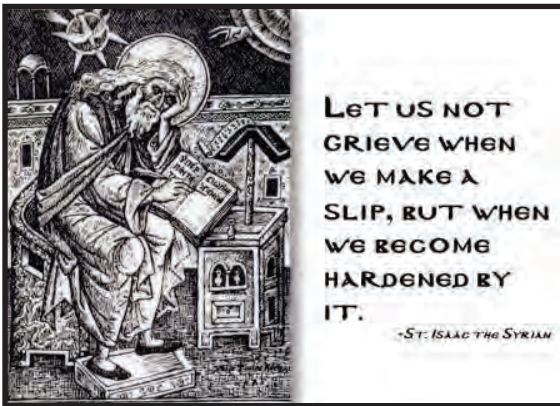
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9 – *SUNDAY BEFORE THE UNIVERSAL EXALTATION OF THE CROSS; POSTFEAST OF NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS. THE HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS ANCESTORS OF GOD, JOACHIM AND ANNE; THE HOLY MARTYR SEVERIAN*

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

For All Parishioners

### **Welcome to Our Visitors**

We warmly welcome all those who are visiting from near and far. Please consider staying for a bite to eat at our coffee hour following the service. But even if you have to run, we thank you for worshipping with us today, and we wish you a blessed remainder of your visit!



### **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.

### **Society of St. John Chrysostom Western Region Sponsored Event**

Saturday, September 22

10:00 AM – 12:30 PM,

#### **St. Marina Coptic Orthodox Church**

5 Wrigley

Irvine, 92618.

(949) 951-5165

St. Marina Coptic Church will host luncheon at the conclusion of the presentations. Speakers will be from the Coptic Church. SSJC-WR President, Fr. George Morelli, stressed the importance of this topic for Christians to increase their knowledge and understanding of Islam and the topic of Martyrdom in the Coptic Church of the Middle East.

If you believe what you like in the Gospels and reject what you don't like, it is not the gospel you believe in, but yourself.

– St. Augustine

## ***Was Jesus Really Silent on Same-Sex “Marriage”?***

*by Christopher Eden*

<http://catholiclane.com/was-jesus-really-silent-on-same-sex-marriage/>

The issue of same-sex “marriage” seems to be everywhere these days. Anyone who voices an objection to it is also, more and more frequently, accused of discrimination and labeled a “bigot.” Now, state and federal governments may very well change the age-old definition of marriage to include people of the same gender and marry two men or two women in civil ceremonies; but these ceremonies will not take place in the Catholic Church – nor do I see how they could in any Christian church – and the reason has absolutely nothing to do with bigotry. The Catechism of the Catholic Church expresses deep love for homosexual persons:

The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible ... They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided. These persons are called to fulfill God’s will in their lives and, if they are Christian, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord’s Cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition. (CCC 2358)

The Church loves men and women living with same-sex attraction; but she has always defined “marriage” as a life-long, male-female relationship, open to bringing new life into the world. That is her Faith.

As you read that last line, I bet you recalled hearing someone say, “But Jesus never spoke a word against same-sex marriage!” I’ve heard it too, from fellow Christians. The assertion is that Christianity’s two thousand year history of opposition to same-sex relationships has been misguided. (Never mind everything St. Paul wrote on the subject [Rom.1:21-32, 1 Cor.6:9-11]

under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.) Marc Barnes countered this argument from the silence of Jesus in a recent blog, noting how Jesus never uttered a word against rape, suicide, or pedophilia either; but to “assume a man’s approval of everything he doesn’t mention is silliness to the highest degree.” All of those issues, homosexual relationships included, were settled matters in Jesus’ first century Palestine; He would have been wasting His breath. As I read the Gospel passage the other day (Mt.19:3-12, August 17) however, I realized how Jesus’ words do undercut any question of same-sex “marriage” occurring in the Church.

Stay with me for a couple of minutes:

Jesus’ stance on marriage was strong. When the Pharisees asked Him whether it was lawful for a man to give his wife a bill of divorce He responded, “The Creator ‘made them male and female ... a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’ ... So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate” (Mt.19:4-6).

The apostles were stunned when He went on to say that only death could dissolve a (valid) marriage, and how anyone who divorced and remarried lived in adultery. “If that is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry!” (Mt.19:10 ) Jesus didn’t back-pedal; they had understood Him just fine. That was marriage in the Kingdom – marriage as it was before humanity’s Fall. Jesus knew it would be difficult, “Not all can accept this word, but only those to whom that is granted” (19:11).

Pay attention to what Jesus said next: “Some are incapable of marriage because they were born so; some, because they were made so by others; some, because they have renounced marriage for the sake of



the kingdom of heaven” (19:12). A man’s ability to be united to his wife, sexually, was what made him a candidate for marriage. If he was unable to achieve sexual union because of a) birth defect, b) castration, or c) a vow of celibacy; then marriage was not his vocation.

The foundation of Jesus’ whole argument is biological. Unless “a man” and “his wife ... become one flesh,” there is no valid marriage. For Jesus, and for anyone committed to His teachings, it is impossible to speak of a “Christian same-sex marriage.” Jesus’ words rule it out absolutely. The parameters for marriage between Christians, the parameters for a sacramental marriage, have been set by Jesus and cannot be changed. “Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will never pass away” (Lk.23:33).

Christians who argue differently undermine their faith. To make their argument they would have to assume that either a) Jesus was wrong on the nature of marriage (If so, He’s not God); or b) the Bible puts false words in Jesus’ mouth (If the Bible got Jesus’ words on marriage wrong, why believe it when it says that God loves us or Jesus died to save us from our sins?) There are some questions where Christians can honestly disagree with one another, but this is not one of them; Jesus teaching is plain, as is His warning to those who try to water His teachings down, “If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels” (Lk.9:26).

When a Christian expresses his belief in “traditional marriage” it is absolutely wrong for others to jump to the conclusion that he does so out of hate and bigotry toward homosexual men and women. People can have valid, principled reasons for

opposing the redefinition of marriage. (A strong argument, for example, can be made from natural law, rooted in the biological complementarity of the spouses.) As a Christian I think I have the most unassailable reason imaginable to love and respect gay men and women, living their lives as they choose, as well as to say that the Christian Faith views “marriage” as a life-long, male-female relationship, open to new life: the Person I believe to be God told me to. I can do nothing else. Western society can and will do what it wants in this matter (as it has with contraception, no-fault divorce and remarriage, and abortion), but within the Church the Sacrament of Marriage will continue on unmodified.

No hate here, just faith – the historic Christian Faith received from Jesus and His Apostles.

*Christopher Eden has worked with evangelistic and retreat apostolates for 25 years. He has served as a coordinator for RCIA as well as working in youth ministry.*

The practice of the Jesus Prayer is simple. Stand before the Lord with the attention in the heart and call to Him, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me!” The essential part of this is not in the words, but in the faith, contrition, and self-surrender to the Lord. With these feelings, one can stand before the Lord even without any words, and it will still be prayer.

*– St. Theophan the Recluse*

# THE LITURGICAL YEAR IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

*By Fr. Theodore Stylianopoulos*

The Liturgy and all the sacraments in the Orthodox Christian Church begin with the prayer:

“Blessed is the kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, always, now and forever”.

The aim of all Christian living -- praying, studying, working and resting is to bring us before the awesome and renewing reality of the kingdom of God. Although God’s kingdom may be described by many words (God’s will, rule, power, lordship, majesty, glory and grace), put simply it is God’s personal holy presence. To live in the reality of God’s kingdom is to live in the presence of God -- with a sense of wonder, joy and thanksgiving in all circumstances and for all things.

What is the significance of the liturgical year?

The liturgical year is a way of discipline in prayer, a pattern of worship, an anchor of support for the life of the Church. But it also has deeper significance. The late George Florovsky, an eminent Orthodox theologian of blessed memory, has taught us that worship is a response to the call of God who has already made known His redeeming love to us through decisive events culminating in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ. Worship has two major aspects: remembrance (anamnesis which means not only historical remembrance but also reliving the events commemorated)

and thanksgiving (including praise and doxology).

Thus the liturgical year, by bringing unceasingly before us God’s mighty deeds of salvation and the reality of God’s kingdom in our midst, is the sanctification of time and thereby the true fulfillment of both personal and corporate aspects of our lives as Christians. Far from being simply a calendar, the liturgical year in the life of the Church -- the life of Christians living in community as brothers and sisters -- in awareness of God’s kingdom, remembering the entire communion of Prophets, Apostles, Saints and all of God’s people on earth and in heaven, being renewed by God’s saving love, helping one another, witnessing to Christ’s good news, and waiting for the fullness of the coming kingdom according to God’s timing.

“If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord” (Rom. 14:8)

Orthodox worship proclaims the centrality of Christ. The liturgical year celebrates the presence of the mystery of Christ in the life of the Church and seeks to make the living Christ a renewing life source for every Orthodox Christian.

Do not the most important feast days of the year celebrate the good news of the life and work of Christ, the Annunciation, His Birth, Presentation in the Temple, Baptism, Transfiguration, Triumphal Entry, Passion Week, Easter, Ascension and His gift of

the Spirit on Pentecost day, all of which are based on the New Testament? Do we not remember and re-live His death and resurrection on each Sunday (*Kyriake*, that is, the Lord's Day) and in each Liturgy? Do we not continuously hear about Jesus' teachings, miracles and encounters with men and women from all walks of life? Even the Feast days of the Prophets, the Apostles, the Theotokos and the Saints, properly understood, point to the centrality of Christ, the Saviour and Lord of all.

This is the essential message of the Orthodox faith: Christ lives and desires to be one with us in a union of holy love. He is the Leader of our life and the Celebrant of the sacraments. He is the Good Shepherd who continues not only to seek out the lost but also to feed those who are already in His flock. Are we prepared to hear His call? Are we willing to open our hearts to Him? Do we seek Him as eagerly as He seeks us? I would like to end this preface with the image of Christ the Pursuer from the conclusion of St. John Chrysostom's 15th Homily on 1 Timothy, a passage to which George Florovsky has pointed. In the final part of this Homily, St. John Chrysostom meditates on Christ's love for us and exhorts Christians to glorify Christ for His countless material and spiritual gifts -- the same Christ that we often neglect and perhaps even secretly dislike for pursuing us and seeking to change our lives. Then St. John has Christ speaking to us in these words:

"But what shall I say? It is not in this way only that I have shown my love to you,

but also by what I have suffered. For you I was spit upon, I was scourged. I emptied myself of glory, I left my Father and came to you, who hate me, and turn from me, and are loath to hear my name. I pursued you, I ran after you, that I might overtake you. I united and joined you to myself, "eat me, drink me," I said. In heaven above I hold you, and on earth below I embrace you. Is it not enough for you that I have your pledge of salvation in heaven? Does this not satisfy your desire? I again descended on earth (through the Eucharist): I not only am mingled with you, I am entwined in you. I am eaten, broken into tiny particles, that the fusion, intermingling, and union may be more complete. Things united remain yet (sometimes) in their own limits, but I am interwoven with you. I would have nothing separating us. I will that we both be one"



**An alternative to just passing out cash**  
*Blessing Bags* - keep a couple in the car so when you see someone who is struggling (ie begging) you can give them a little something. Acts of Kindness. Don't talk about, BE about it.

## 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).



### Sunday offering for August 26

Amount	Number
\$10.00	2
\$14.00	1 (loose)
\$15.00	1
\$20.00	1
\$40.00	4
\$50.00	4
\$75.00	1
\$80.00	1
\$100.00	3
<hr/>	
\$834.00	17 Parishioners

Parishioner Total: \$834.00

Average / parish household (39): \$21.38

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00

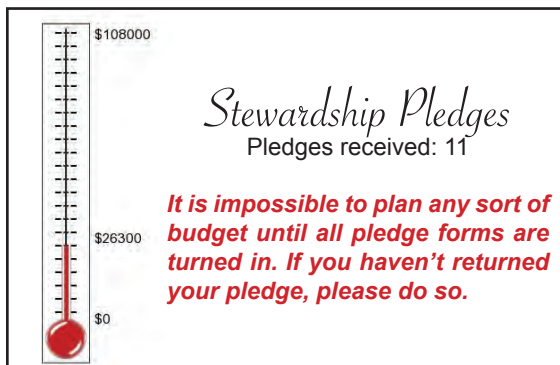
Shortfall: (\$1291.00)

Gifts to Parish: \$200.00

## On a Lighter Side...

### Theology 911 \* Final Exam

1. Summarize Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* in three succinct sentences. You may use your Bible.
2. St. Martin of Tours, Pope Clement VII and Karl Barth were not contemporaries. Had they known each other, how might the history of the Reformation have turned out differently?
3. Define a moral system that satisfies Liberals, Conservatives, Moderates, and the entire population of Ancient Rome, ca. 3 BC.
4. Memorize the Bible. Recite it in tongues.
5. Imagine you have the stigmata. Would it affect your productivity at work? Would you still be admitted into fine restaurants? Would it be covered by your medical insurance, or should it constitute a pre-existent condition?
6. What would it mean to be eternal, co-eternal, and non-existent all at once?
7. St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Augustine of Hippo decide to rob a bank. The note to the teller is 1,200 pages long, not counting footnotes, complete with a promise of damnation if the teller does not accept immediate Baptism. In the middle of the heist, they engage in an extended debate as to whether or not the money really exists. Are they committing a mortal or a venial sin?
8. Speculate on what the current status of salvation history might have been if Abraham had just stayed in Ur.







**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

***His Body, His Blood***

And this food is called among us "Eucharistia" [the Eucharist], of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Savior, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh. For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, 'Do this in remembrance of Me, this is My body;' and

that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, 'This is My blood;' and gave it to them alone.

And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things. And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost. And on the day called Sunday, ... we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration.

*St. Justin the Martyr*