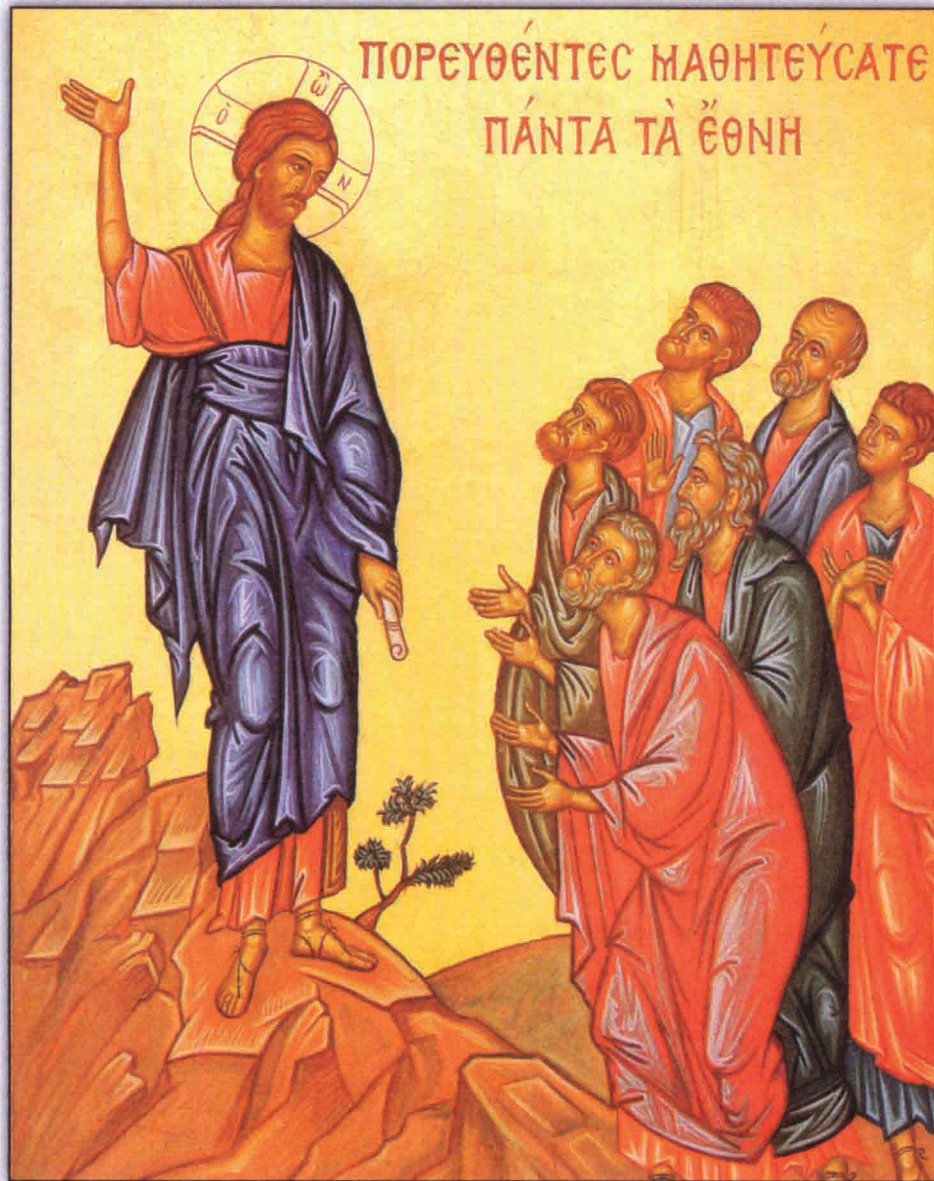


SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
SECOND SUNDAY OF LUKE



Icon of Christ Teaching the Apostles

October 2, 2011
16TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Tone 7

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 3 - OCTOBER 9

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8 – VENERABLE PELAGIA

6:00 PM – Great Vespers for Sunday

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9 – 17TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST - ST. JAMES THE LESSER, APOSTLE

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners

Parish Meeting

The next parish meeting will be on October 23. Please make every effort to attend. Further information regarding our financial situation will be given and elections for the Pastoral Council will take place.

Generations of Faith:

Mark your Calendars

November 20:

The Divine Liturgy - Preparation and Proskomedia.

January 19:

The Divine Liturgy - From “Blessed is the Kingdom” to the Gospel.

March 18:

The Divine Liturgy - From the Gospel to the Great Entrance

May 20:

The Divine Liturgy – The *Anaphora* and Holy Communion.

Do you have a question about the Divine Liturgy? Please let Fr. James know and he will cover it during the appropriate Generations of Faith session.

A new member of God’s Church!



The Holy Mysteries of Initiation will be celebrated next Sunday at the Divine Liturgy welcoming into our community Sofia Elizabeth Oborski, daughter of Stefan and Magdalena Oborski.

*THE EARTH IS THE LORD’S
AND THE FULLNESS THEREOF*

From Parish Publishing LLC on Psalm 24:1

The principle behind stewardship is that every material thing, though you may call it yours... actually belongs to God. God owns it all: your land, your property, your income, your life. This is God’s world. When you give a truly significant portion of your money, you are only setting apart for God’s use a portion of the money that has been entrusted to you by God. The person who gives sacrificially does so because he or she knows whose world this is!

If God comes first in our lives, then giving to God should also come first. The person who says, “After I pay my bills I can’t afford to give,” may be telling the truth. But these people have made a grave error. They have put the cart before the horse!

None of us could afford to give with what’s left. We must put God first and then manage the rest of our income in a way by which we will still pay all our bills. This is easier than we think because by doing so, we will have God’s blessing!

“In 2020 I would like to see our Church as one body, which exists in the entire world, speaks different languages, and proclaims the Gospel in different countries”

On May 7 2011 A.D. during his visit to Drohobych (Lviv region), the Head of the UGCC had a meeting with journalists, seminarians and clergy in Drohobych Spiritual Seminary. The UGCC Primate visited Drohobych on the occasion of the celebration of Bishop Julian Voronvskyi’s jubilee – the 75th birthday anniversary, as well as 25th anniversary of his Episcopal ordination.

Answering the question of the journalists about the priority in his Archipastoral ministry, His Beatitude said, “It is hard for me to single out one such priority.” He continued, “You probably noticed that my first pastoral message had been directed to the youth. I would like the youth to be always a priority in my ministry. I think nowadays our Church is young, not in relation strictly to the age criteria, but taking into consideration the average age of our clergy and religious people.” His Beatitude added, “When I said in an interview with Channel 5 television that it is actually very natural to be a young Christian, this fact became a discovery for many Ukrainians. Many people suppose for some reason that only elderly people should attend churches. I am convinced that the future of our Church, which we should

be building now, depends on how profoundly we will be able to initiate young generation into the mystery of Church. How well we are able to transmit to them the fullness of the Divine life which flows from it”, concluded the UGCC Primate.

Finally, the Head of the UGCC shared his vision of the UGCC in 10 years, “In 2020 I would

like to see our Church as one body throughout the whole world, which speaks different languages, proclaims the Gospel in different countries, but remains one united Church of Eastern tradition. Taking the opportunity of having the seminarians’ presence among us, I would like to call on our dear brothers to consider very seriously a missionary ministry. In these times, our faithful are spread all over the world. Our task is to go there where they are. Our



people need priests. Then, it is possible that in 2020 we will have eparchies, metropolitans in Africa, the Far East, and in those countries where our people are. People who are known and unknown to us, but those who definitely need spiritual care, people who need to have a father, knowing that this father from Ukraine really takes care of them.”

[http://www.ugcc.org.ua/news_single.0.html?&L=2&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=5222&cHash=2799c18e2b2bd556f8972dcf89f33444](http://www.ugcc.org.ua/news_single.0.html?&L=2&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=5222&cHash=2799c18e2b2bd556f8972dcf89f33444)

OVERCOMING SECULARISM AND THE REDUCTION OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY
By Father Alexander Schmemmann

The first level of that religious restoration is, without any doubt, the liturgical one. Our Church need not be ashamed of her identification with liturgy, of her reputation as the liturgical Church *par excellence*, even if, in Western categories, this is understood as a lack of concern for the *social* and *activistic* aspects of Christianity. For the liturgy was always experienced and understood in our Church as precisely the entering of men into, and communion with, the reality of the Kingdom of God, as that experience of God which alone makes possible everything else—all "action", all "fight." And in this sense the less pragmatic and "world-oriented" it is—the more "useful" it is. In my article on the Liturgical Problem I tried to describe the main aspects of what I understand as liturgical restoration. Let me repeat here only that it consists fundamentally in the recovery by the Church of the true spirit and meaning of liturgy, as an all-embracing *vision of life*, including heaven and earth, time and eternity, spirit and matter and as the *power* of that vision to transform our lives. But in order to recover this the priest who is, above everything else, the celebrant of the liturgy, its guardian and interpreter, must cease to consider the liturgy and

the liturgical life of the parish in terms of "attendance", "needs", "possibilities" and "impossibilities". The reasoning: "since no one comes to church on Saturday night, why have a service?"—is the very type of reasoning that must be radically rejected. For, as we have seen, the only real *justification* of the parish as organization is precisely to make the liturgy, the cult of the Church as complete, as Orthodox, as *adequate* as possible, and it is the liturgy, therefore, that is the basic criterion of the only real "success" of the parish. Let the Saturday service—this unique weekly celebration of Christ's resurrection, this essential "source" of our Christian understanding of time and life, be served week after week in an empty church—then at least the various secular "expressions" and "leaders" of the parish: committees, commissions and boards, may become aware of the simple fact that their claim: "we work for the Church" is an empty claim, for if the "Church" for which they work is not primarily a praying and worshipping Church it is not "Church", whatever their work, effort and enthusiasm. Is it not indeed a tragic paradox: we build ever greater and richer and more beautiful churches and we pray less and less in them? Is it not the only

real measure of our "success" that today one may easily be a "Churchmember" (and even a "president of the Church") in good standing spending some fifty-two hours in Church per year? And finally, are the massive and complex organizations known as "parishes" and which spend an infinitely superior number of hours discussing their "fund raising" really necessary for those fifty-two hours of corporate prayer? The liturgy—which is the sole responsibility of the priest, his "area" *par excellence*—must become again the measure, the criterion, the judgment of the "parish life." All conversations about people being "busy" and "having no time" are no excuses. People were always busy, people always worked, and in the past they were, in fact, much busier and had more obstacles to overcome in order to come to Church. In the last analysis it all depends where the treasure of man is—for there will be his heart. The only difference between the present and the past is—and I have repeated this many times—that in the past a man knew that he has to make an *effort*, and that today he expects from the Church an effort to *adjust herself* to him and his "possibilities". The liturgical restoration must be thus the first challenge to secularism, the first judgment on the all-powerful "prince of this world."

The second religious task and justification of the parish is *education*.

At present it is limited almost exclusively to children and teenagers and constitutes a specialized department within the parish, very often not even under the direct guidance of the priest. What I have in mind here is something much more general: it is the concept of the Christian life as "discipleship" and "education", and thus the understanding of the whole parish as an unceasing education. Virtually all our difficulties, crises and conflicts have as their principle cause the almost abysmal ignorance by our people of the very elements of Christianity. A recent survey shows that more than seventy-five percent of parishioners in "good standing" have never read the Gospel—except what they hear in Church on Sunday—not to speak of the Old Testament. If one adds to this that even some hierarchs think that a formal theological education is not a real "must" for a priest, and that a substantial number of our priests do not consider teaching their flocks to be their sacred duty—one has the peculiar image of a Church disinterested in the very object of her being. But the Christian concept of *faith* includes both—the *act of believing* and the *content of belief* and one without the other makes a faith dead.

Finally the third essential dimension of the religious restoration in the parish is the recovery of its *missionary* character.

And by this I mean primarily a shift from the selfish self-centeredness of the modern parish to the concept of the parish as *servant*. We use today an extremely ambiguous phraseology: we praise men because they “serve their parish”, for example. “Parish” is an end in itself justifying all sacrifices, all efforts, all activities. “For the benefit of the parish” . . . But it is ambiguous because the parish is not an end in itself and once it has become one—it is, in fact, an idol condemned as all other idols in the Gospel. The parish is the means for men of serving God and it itself must *serve* God and His work

and only then is it justified and becomes “Church”. And again it is the sacred duty and the real function of the priest not to “serve the parish”, but to make the parish serve God—and there is a tremendous difference between these two functions. And for the parish to serve God means, first of all, *to help* God’s work wherever it is to be helped. I am convinced, and it is enough to read the Gospel just once to be convinced, that as

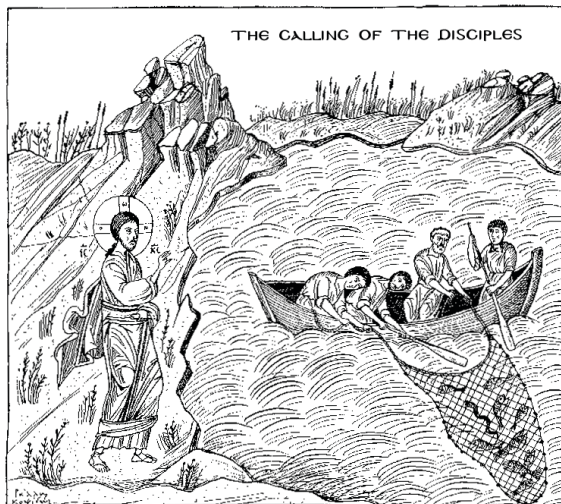
long as our seminaries are obliged, year after year, literally to beg for money, as long as we cannot afford a few chaplains to take care of our students on college campuses, as long as so many obvious, urgent, self-evident spiritual needs of the Church remain unfulfilled because each parish must first “take care of itself”—the beautiful mosaics, golden vestments and jeweled crosses do not please God and that which does not please God is not

Christian whatever the appearances.

If a man says “I won’t help the poor because I must first take care of myself” we call it selfishness and term it a sin. If a parish says it and acts accordingly we consider it Christian—but as long as this “double standard”

is accepted as a self-evident norm, as long as all this is praised and glorified as good and Christian at innumerable parish banquets and “affairs”, the parish betrays rather than serves God.

But having said all this one can hear the question: “All this may be right and good, but how does one even start one of these ‘restorations’?” Is not all this the best illustration of precisely those “impossibilities” which were mentioned



at the beginning of this article? And it is here that I will remind my reader of the other—the “*personal*” dimension of Orthodoxy. I am fully aware that the parish as *organization*, cannot be “converted” to any of these ideals, except perhaps theoretically. In fact, none was in the long history of the Church, which begins with the terrible words addressed to one of the oldest “parishes”: “I know your works, you have the name of being alive and you are dead” (Rev. 3:1). Conversion and faith are always personal, and this means that although the priest must preach to *all*, it is always *some* who hear and receive and accept the Word and respond to it. As I said above the greatest tragedy and the surrender to secularism consist precisely in the fact that the *parish*—as organization, as an impersonal majority, as *ail*—has virtually concealed from the pastor the person, who is the ultimate object of God’s love and saving grace. We are so obsessed with the social that not only do we neglect the person but we simply do not believe anymore that it is the *social* that depends on the *personal* and not vice versa. But Christ preached to the multitudes, to all, yet he chose the twelve and spent most of His time teaching them “privately”. *Mutatis mutandis* (the necessary changes having been made), we must follow the same pattern and it is the only way to the solution of our spiritual problem. Speaking of the liturgical restoration I

mentioned the empty Church. In reality, however, *it will not be empty*—and if “two or three” attend and participate and “enjoy” the service we have not labored in vain. If but a handful of men and women will discover the sweetness of the knowledge of God, will meet to read and to understand the Gospel, to deepen their spiritual life—we have not labored in vain. If a few will decide to organize a little missionary group, to direct their attention to the needs of the Church—we have not labored in vain. The priest must free himself from the obsession with numbers and success, must learn to value the only real success: That which is hidden in God and cannot be reported in statistics and credited to him at parish affairs. He must himself rediscover the eternal truth about “a little leaven which leavens the whole lump” (I Cor. 5:6)—for this is *the* very essence of Christian faith. For these few will—whether they want it or not—become *witnesses* and sooner or later their testimony will bear its fruit. The parish may be *improved* but only a *person* can be *saved*. Yet his salvation has a tremendous meaning for all and thus for the parish itself. Once more—what is, indeed, *impossible* for a parish, is being constantly revealed as *possible* for a person and, in the last analysis the whole meaning of Christianity is the victory, made *possible* for man by Christ, over the *impossibilities* imposed on man by the “world.”



**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

Папox: о. Яків Бенкстон

frjames@mac.com

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

Be Merciful, Just as Your Father is Merciful

Perhaps no other attribute of God, besides His love, attracts us to Him as does His mercy. This quality distinguishes Him from all false gods. From the beginning to the end of the Bible, the endless procession of saints extols His mercy, repeating the refrain: "His mercy endures forever!"

His mercy caused Him to devise a plan of redemption that would reach every human being, moved Him to give His only Son as a ransom for all sinners, established His kingdom and His Church, inspired the Scriptures, provided the sacraments, forgives all our transgressions and heals our diseases, and gives us peace, joy, and hope and time for repentance. Great is His mercy!

That indescribable, overflowing, and undeserved mercy melts away all our pride and arrogance, fills us with gratitude, and gives us a new birth, a new life, a new will, and a new viewpoint. Now we look at our fellow inhabitants of the earth with the eyes of our merciful Father.

And so the chain reaction goes on from God to us to others. As His mercy endures forever, so may our mercifulness – as that of His children – be likewise enduring.

O give thanks unto the Lord, for His mercy endures forever. Amen.