

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of Saints Sergius and Bacchus -- October 7th

October 7, 2012
NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
THE HOLY MARTYRS SERGIUS AND BACCHUS

TONE 2

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 8 – OCTOBER 14

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13 – *THE HOLY AND GLORIOUS APOSTLE THOMAS*

6:00 PM – Great Vespers of Sunday

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14 – *SUNDAY OF THE FATHERS OF THE 7TH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL; THE HOLY MARTYRS NAZARIUS, GERVASE, PROTASE AND CELSIUS; OUR VENERABLE MOTHER PARASCEVA OF TERNOVO*

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

For All Parishioners

Sunday offering for September 30

Amount	Number
\$5.00	1
\$10.00	1
\$20.00	6
\$26.00	1 (loose)
\$30.00	1
\$40.00	3
\$50.00	4
\$75.00	1
<u>\$100.00</u>	<u>5</u>
\$1101.00	15 Parishioners
	1 Visitor

Parishioner Total: \$1001.00

Visitor Total: \$100.00

Average / parish household (39): \$25.67

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00

Shortfall: (\$1124.00)

Дуже Дякую!

May God bless all those who sacrificed their Saturday to prepare the delicious food and to set up the hall. Your hard work and dedication are a shining example to us all. Blessings also to all those who brought the many delicious dishes for last week's Parish luncheon. Last but not least, Thank You to all who helped to clean up. The luncheon and raffle earned \$721.00 for the parish.

Catechetical Video Series

Starting today, after the Sunday Divine Liturgy begins the showing of a series of catechetical videos. The first series to be shown will be "Catholicism" by Fr. Robert Barrons. A future video series will be "The Way: Intruducing Orthodox Christianity." **Please attend! Будьмо Уважні!**

God's Extended Hand

FOCUS (Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve) has provided us with a special bin for collecting donations of clothing, toiletries, etc. to be distributed at GEH. It is located near the door of the church hall.

Holodomor Commemoration

All are invited to attend. St. Mary's Ukrainian Orthodox Church (9558 Campo Rd. Spring Valley) on October 28 after Divine Liturgy (approximately 11:30). There will be a Panakhyda followed by a short program in the church hall.

VIII Population

Thus the Church condemns as a grave offense against human dignity and justice all those activities of governments or other public authorities which attempt to limit in any way the freedom of couples in deciding about children. (Familiaris Consortio, 30)

IN RECENT DECADES, THE ISSUE OF OVERPOPULATION has led the United States to spend millions of dollars on population control efforts. Much of this money is given to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that work in developing nations to address what they see as problems of overpopulation.

In this effort to control population, abortion, sterilization, and contraception have become an accepted part of U.S. foreign policy.

The so-called Mexico City Policy, originally implemented in 1984 by President Ronald Reagan, restricts federal money earmarked for family planning from being spent on abortion overseas or on military bases. It specifically prohibits funding for programs that force, promote, or advocate changes in laws to legalize abortion. The Mexico City Policy was ended by President Bill Clinton, reinstated in 2001 by President Bush, and ended again by President Obama in 2009.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops fully supports the continuing implementation of this policy. When the Mexico City Policy is in place, many NGOs are barred from receiving federal family-planning money from USAID and similar organizations.

As with voluntary sterilization, unnatural contraceptive techniques remain entrenched in government-funded family-planning programs. In fact, the United States spent \$648.5 million in fiscal year 2010 on contraception around the world, and the Obama administration requested an additional \$67.2 million for 2011. Yet the Church teaches that contraception is immoral.

The many Church documents that address the problem of contraception stress the self-giving that stands at the heart of the relationship between a husband and wife. Contraception is a deliberate refusal of this gift. “This leads not only to a positive refusal to be open to life but also to a falsification of the inner truth of conjugal love” (*Familiaris Consortio*, 32). What’s more, recent statistics show that increased contraceptive use does not result in decreased recourse to abortion, and condom use alone has not been successful in curbing the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Abstinence programs, which the Church does applaud, have recently been successfully employed to fight the plague of AIDS, most notably in Africa. Despite this success, natural family planning (NFP) has never been employed by any of the federally funded NGOs around the world, even though the Foreign Assistance Act was amended in 1981 to ensure that NFP methods were included in the global family planning discussion.

Controversies over population policy became quite visible during the pontificate of John Paul II when the Holy See participated in a succession of world conferences on population: Cairo (1994), Beijing (1995 and 2000), and New York (1999). During these conferences,

the Holy See delegation united with key allies, including most Muslim countries, to keep the documents from enshrining such things as a “universal women’s right to abortion” and an unfettered right of adolescents to “reproductive health services.”

Despite their efforts, each conference incrementally added more “reproductive rights” until, in arguably the worst event, the UN called for the training of health-care workers to perform abortions and make them available. To make matters worse, the Vatican’s repeated calls to include conscientious objection protection for pro-life health-care workers were totally ignored.

Population policy also has a domestic side: At least 23 states have mandated that employee insurance policies cover contraceptives, including the abortifacient “morning-after pill.” For a Catholic institution, such as a hospital or university, such a mandate is a clear violation

of conscience. While some states have included a “conscience clause” that allows a business to opt out on religious grounds, some do not, and some are so poorly written that the Catholic Church does not qualify. The threat is real, since a federal mandate would override all the conscience clauses of the states and require all religious employers to provide contraception, including the USCCB.

Summary

- ✓ Catholic teaching stipulates that abortion, contraception, and sterilization should not be part of our nation’s public policy.
- ✓ Artificial contraception is unreliable, continues to lead to abortions, and has not by itself been able to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS.
- ✓ Abstinence programs supported by the Church have recently been successfully employed, most notably in Africa, to fight the plague of HIV/AIDS.

IX The Death Penalty

Assuming that the guilty party’s identity and responsibility have been fully determined, the traditional teaching of the Church does not exclude recourse to the death penalty, if this is the only possible way of effectively defending human lives against the unjust aggressor. (CCC 2267)

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IS PROBABLY THE MOST MISUNDERSTOOD moral issue in the Catholic Church. This confusion stems from the change made in the Catechism in 1997 to bring the teaching into conformity with the encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* (1995).

The change was widely reported in the media and by some Catholic commentators as the Church’s

declaring total opposition to the use of the death penalty. This view is not supported by the words of the revised Catechism or *Evangelium Vitae* itself.

The Church’s position can be summarized in this way: The Church is not opposed to the death penalty in principle but in practice. To oppose the death penalty in principle would be to remove one of the most basic responsibilities of the common good—to provide defense and security against aggression.

‘Bloodless Means’

The Church acknowledges that criminals must be punished and leaves open the possibility that alternatives to the death penalty may not

be sufficient to protect the common good. However, thanks to advances in the judicial and penal systems, it is becoming more possible for the state to fulfill its obligation to protect the common good by “bloodless means.” Modern penology has made the necessity of capital punishment “very rare, if not practically non-existent” (*Evangelium Vitae*, 56).

However, what is true in the United States and other developed countries may not be true in less-developed parts of the world, where prisons provide security neither for the incarcerated nor the public. Prudential judgment is required to apply this teaching to specific circumstances.

Penal Care

Political candidates best represent Church teaching when they recognize the necessity of protecting the common good from aggression and providing the necessary resources for the improvement of prison care, while still upholding the inherent dignity of individuals.

Elected representatives have a threefold responsibility: first, to recognize the preference of bloodless means in treating the worst criminals; second, to ensure judicial sentences are commensurate with the crimes and the threat to the common good; and third, to provide the resources needed to keep prisons secure for inmates, staff, and the public.

We have nothing to lose by ending the practice of capital punishment. Yet, if we are to rely on life imprisonment, the underlying sentencing policies must prevent dangerous criminals from returning to general society. The only way to completely eliminate the death penalty is to ensure that the penal system truly protects society from the most dangerous inmates.

Reform and Renewal

The primary purpose of punishment is to “redress the disorder caused by the offense,” but the Church also holds forth the hope that those being punished will experience moral renewal in the acceptance of a just punishment: “Punishment then, in addition to defending public order and protecting people’s safety, has a medicinal purpose: as far as possible, it must contribute to the correction of the guilty party” (CCC 2266).

The Holy Father and the bishops hope that this view of punishment will itself be a witness to the culture of life. Rather than seeing justice as revenge (in terms of “eye for an eye”), they urge Catholics to understand the cost of violence, even when violence is sanctioned by the State in the name of protecting the common good.

The Church urges us to go beyond the action that is justified to the action that is a better witness to the moral order.

Summary

- ✓ The Church teaches that the death penalty is acceptable in principle but, when possible, should be avoided in practice.
- ✓ It is the responsibility of elected officials to ensure that penal systems and sentencing policies do, in fact, protect society from known aggressors.
- ✓ The practical elimination of the death penalty is based upon the strength of the penal system and the reliability of sentencing procedures.

AN ICON OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD: THE INTEGRATED EXPRESSION OF ALL THE LITURGICAL ARTS

By Andrew Gould of New World Byzantine

The liturgical art of the Orthodox Church offers the world nothing less than a vision of the Kingdom of God. There can be no higher calling for art than this. Liturgical art is the combined effort of apostles and theologians, hymnographers and composers, architects and painters, all manner of craftsmen, and the clergy and choir at every service, to reveal through so many arts the living reality of the Kingdom of God.

Yet despite the high calling of this service to mankind, and the immense complexity of this artistic interplay, liturgical art as an integrated whole has been little studied. Some academics have concentrated on sacred texts, others on musical traditions or icons, but there is little attempt to understand how each depends upon the others. Further, the 'minor' arts, such as liturgical furniture and textiles, are studied hardly at all, and few consider what role these arts play in expressing the fullness of God's Kingdom.

Orthodox Christians, particularly in America, must develop a deeper understanding of the role of liturgical art. We have received the Orthodox Tradition in fragmentary form. Liturgical texts have come to us from the Old World intact, but the ancient architectural and iconographic traditions did not immigrate at all, thus requiring deliberate reconstruction through research. The music and ceremonial practices we have inherited need improvement, and the

lesser arts survive today very sporadically, partially as sentimentalized traditions whose purpose is forgotten, partially as little more than ornament which is considered a dispensable luxury.

This broken history and the academic bias of the modern world have led to a certain imbalance. Sacred texts are treated with great importance in our seminaries, and churches make every effort to present them appropriately. But the other arts are often dismissed as mere decoration for the texts.

Icons are understood as just another way of showing us what we already know from texts. Music is just a way to make hymnography sound pretty and dignified. And architecture, vestments, and furniture are only there to lend appropriate decorum and symbolism to a service whose real purpose is the worship of God through scripture and prayers.

This view is false. Sacred texts are not alone in expressing divinity. Everything in the world has the capacity to reveal God to us, and every form of liturgical art reveals God in its own way. An icon is holy because it shows us something uniquely visual about God's Kingdom. It cannot be reduced to a system of symbols, a painted text. A melody bears meaning that is purely musical. Some melodies are fit for church and some are not, and the reason can only be heard, not explained with words. Sacred melodies

reveal to us a truth about Heaven that cannot be found in Scripture. Even the smallest arts – a blend of incense, the embroidery on a sacred towel – directly represent an aspect of God’s Kingdom. They are not there to ornament something else, but rather they themselves are icons, essential glimpses of the fullness of God’s Kingdom. To deny this is to deny the incarnation. Ours is not the religion in which the Logos became text.

Christ became flesh, and he revealed the Father to us not only in his words, but in his very appearance.

The church has always recognized that an incarnational faith must be manifest

in a fully incarnate liturgy, where the arts work together to edify all the senses. And if liturgical art is to express the fullness of the kingdom of God, then all the arts must work together. After all, incense cannot explain our doctrines any better than scripture can tell us how Heaven smells. And so, as we examine each art one by one, it becomes apparent that each one has certain strengths and weaknesses in terms of what it can express. While sacred texts have the ability to explain facts and abstractions with great specificity and clarity, they are unable to impact our hearts with the sudden intensity of a tolling church bell or the astonishing beauty of an iconostasis.

THE MARTYRS SERGIUS AND BACCHUS
Commemorated October 7th

The Martyrs Sergius and Bacchus in Syria were appointed to high positions in the army by the emperor Maximian (284-305), who did not know that they were Christians. Envious people informed Maximian that his two trusted counsellors did not honor the pagan gods. This was considered to be a crime against the state. The emperor, wanting to convince himself of the truth of the accusation, ordered Sergius and Bacchus to offer sacrifice to the idols, but they replied that they honored the One God and worshiped only Him.

Maximian commanded that the martyrs be stripped of the insignia of military rank (their belts, gold pendants, and rings), and then dressed them in feminine clothing. They were led through the city with an iron chains around their necks, and the people mocked them. Then he summoned Sergius and Bacchus to him again

and in a friendly manner advised them not to be swayed by Christian fables, but to return to the Roman gods. The saints refuted the emperor's words, and demonstrated the folly of worshipping the pagan gods.

The emperor commanded that they be sent to the governor of the eastern part of Syria, Antiochus, a fierce hater of Christians. Antiochus had received his position with the help of Sergius and Bacchus. "My fathers and benefactors!" he said. "Have pity on yourselves, and also on me. I do not want to condemn my benefactors to cruel tortures." The holy martyrs replied, "For us life is Christ, and to die is gain." The enraged Antiochus ordered Bacchus to be mercilessly beaten, and the holy martyr surrendered his soul to the Lord. They shod Sergius with iron sandals with nails in their soles and sent him to another city, where he was beheaded with the sword.



**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

Heroic Spirit of Priests

The shepherd needs great wisdom and a thousand eyes to examine the soul's condition from every angle ... The shepherd of sheep has the flock following him wherever he leads; or if some turn aside from the direct path and leave the good pasture to graze in barren and dangerous places, it is enough for him to call loudly, drive them back again, and restore to the flock those who were separated. But if a man wanders away from the right faith, the shepherd needs a lot of concentration, perseverance, and patience. He cannot drag by force or constrain by fear, but must by persuasion lead him back to the true beginning from which he has fallen away. He needs a heroic spirit, not to grow despondent or neglect the salvation of the wanderers, but to keep on thinking and saying: 'Perhaps God may give them the knowledge of the truth and they may be freed from the snare of the devil.'

His sheep was a sign of love for Himself ... God has given greater power to priests than to natural parents, not only for punishment, but also for help. The difference between the two is as great as between the present and the future life. Parents bring us into this life; priests into the life to come. Parents cannot avert bodily death nor drive away the onset of disease; priests have often saved the soul that is sick and at the point of death, by making the punishment milder for some, and preventing others from ever incurring it, not only through instruction and warning, but also through helping them by prayer. They have authority to remit sins, not only when they regenerate us, but afterwards too ... Again, natural parents cannot help their sons if they fall foul of the prominent and powerful, but priests have often appeased the anger of God himself, to say nothing of rulers and kings.

It is not surprising that the Lord said concern for

St. John Chrysostom