

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



*Icon of Saints Plato and Roman -- November 18th*

**November 18, 2012**  
**TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**  
*OUR VENERABLE FATHER JOANNICIUS THE GREAT*  
*THE HOLY MARTYRS NICANDER, BISHOP OF MYRA, AND HERMAS, PRIEST*

**TONE 8**

**SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 19 – NOVEMBER 25**

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 21 – THE ENTRANCE INTO THE TEMPLE OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

✙ Lubomyra Knianicky; req: Bohdan Knianicky

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 22 – THE ENTRANCE INTO THE TEMPLE OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

Thanksgiving to God for all things

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 24 – POSTFEAST OF ENTRANCE INTO THE TEMPLE; THE HOLY APOSTLE PHILEMON AND HIS COMPANIONS

**PLEASE NOTE: NO VESPERS THIS EVENING**

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 25 – *TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; LEAVE-TAKING (APODOSIS) OF ENTRANCE INTO THE TEMPLE; THE HOLY HIEROMARTYRS CLEMENT, POPE OF ROME AND PETER, PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA*

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

For All Parishioners



**Catechetical Video Series**

Today, after the Divine Liturgy we continue showing a series of catechetical videos. The first series to be shown will be “Catholicism” by Fr. Robert Barrons.

“‘Catholicism’ could well become one of the most significant efforts ever to advance what Pope John Paul II called ‘The New Evangelization.’”

— George Weigel,  
Biographer of Pope John Paul II

A future video series will be “The Way: Intruding Orthodox Christianity.”

**Please attend! Будьмо Уважні!**

**Sunday offering for November 11**

Amount	Number
\$5.00	2
\$10.00	3
\$15.00	1
\$20.00	1
\$25.00	1
\$40.00	3
\$50.00	2
\$51.00	1 (loose)
\$75.00	1
\$100.00	2
\$125.00	1
\$150.00	1
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\$921.00	18 Parishioners

Parishioner Total: \$916.00

Visitor Total: \$5.00

Average / parish household (42): \$22.34

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00

Shortfall: **(\$1,209.00)**

2nd Collection: \$55

Pancake Breakfast (gross): \$354.00



**Mark Your Calendars**

On December 16 St. Nicholas will visit our parish. Please come and greet him and enjoy the Christmas bake-sale and bazaar.



# "WHADDYAMEAN FASTING? IT'S THE HOLIDAYS!"

*adapted from Marek Simon, Assistant Director of Antiochian Village Camp*

Christmas parties, good ole' St. Nick, & shop, shop, shop! Our Christmas list is prepared well in advance and - look out! - lights and trees up in November! These are a few things that begin to consume many of our minds as the holiday season approaches. We can't wait until Christmas and the array of fashionable clothes, iPhones, and decisions, decisions! LCD or Plasma? Mac or Windows? And who knows what else! It's a time to eat, drink and be merry, right? But wait a minute. Did I hear someone say that we are supposed to be fasting???

For us Orthodox Christians, November 15 marks the beginning of a 40-day fast that concludes on the Feast of our Lord's Nativity (a.k.a., Christmas). The Nativity Fast is a time of preparation for the birth of our Lord. We are taught to fast from meat, dairy products and fish. Let's be honest. Many of us go to schools and live in homes where we do not observe any sort of fast during this time, and for those of us who do, it's pretty difficult to say the least! How can we possibly go to a Christmas party and not eat meat or cheese or drink eggnog?

Why would someone choose to fast during this time when it seems like everyone else is doing the opposite? In reality, the answer is pretty simple: Jesus Christ. We are taught to fast during this time, not as a punishment or because the Church doesn't want us to have fun, but because the Church is concerned with one thing and one thing only, our salvation.

Think about it. The world we live in today teaches us to continually seek to do one thing - love ourselves. Jesus Christ, through the Church, teaches us to continually seek to do another thing - love our neighbor. Society teaches us to order the best-tasting, most expensive steak. Christ teaches us to forget about the steak, eat a plate of spaghetti or some lentil

soup, and use the money to buy a meal for someone who hasn't eaten in days. Society teaches us to spend time and money on Christmas trees, Christmas lights, and expensive gifts. Christ teaches us to be a tree that bears fruit, to be a light in the darkness, and to put on the gifts of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, & self-control (Gal 5.22-23).

There are no easy answers to the situations we may face this holiday season if we choose to follow the narrow way of the Gospel. One thing that must be said is that we cannot do it alone. We need each other! Our friends, families and our churches should be fasting together as best we can. We also need prayer. Fasting is of no value unless we pray also. Encourage your family and friends to pray together at meals. You could even attend Vespers.

Perhaps most importantly, talk with your priest or spiritual father about how to approach the Fast. He will be your guide and source of wisdom to help during this time. Each day is an opportunity for us to choose to live as a Christian and accept the responsibility that goes along with it. Rather than just spending hours at the mall looking for the perfect gift, we could spend a couple of hours serving at a soup kitchen and a few dollars on clothes for people who cannot afford to clothe themselves. What a wonderful project this would be for your parish this fasting season. We are all quite capable of fasting beginning November 15. As stated above, talk to your priest about how to start, especially if you've never done it before. Approach the days ahead not as the 'holiday season', but as preparation for a 'Holy Day', the day of the birth our Lord. May Christ strengthen and guide you in the upcoming months!



## Greeting Cards

Christmas Cards and various other greeting cards are for sale in the Church Hall. Please see Mary Kitt to purchase.

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*IF ONE IS CALLED TO BE CATHOLIC, one follows what the Church teaches; that is the correct understanding of conscience (as upheld also by Vatican II). And if one really cannot follow what the Church teaches, then one's conscience requires that one leave the Church. That is the adult decision. One's conscience does not require that one makes up one's own personal religion and then pretend that it is Catholic.*

– Bishop Robert C. Morlino

## ***Four years later, Vatican takes a different approach toward Obama***

*By Francis X. Rocca*

*Catholic News Service*

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- The day after Barack Obama won the presidency in 2008, the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, hailed his election as a "choice that unites," exemplifying America's ability to "overcome fractures and divisions that until only recently could seem incurable." Pope Benedict XVI sent the president-elect a congratulatory telegram the same day, noting the "historic occasion" of his election.

Four years later, the Vatican's reaction to Obama's re-election had a markedly different tone.

"If Obama truly wants to be the president of all Americans," said *L'Osservatore* Nov. 7, "he should finally acknowledge the demands forcefully arising from religious communities -- above all the Catholic Church -- in favor of the natural family, life and finally religious liberty itself."

Speaking to reporters the same day, the Vatican spokesman, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, voiced hope that Obama would use his second term for the "promotion of the culture of life and of religious liberty."

The statements alluded to Obama policies favoring legalized abortion, same-sex marriage and a plan to require nearly all health insurance plans, including those offered by most Catholic universities and agencies, to cover sterilizations and contraceptives, which are forbidden by the church's moral teaching.

The insurance mandate in particular, which U.S. bishops have strenuously protested for the past year, has proven an even greater source of division between the church and the Obama administration than their previous disagreements and threatens to aggravate tensions between Washington and the Vatican during the president's second term.

From the beginning of Obama's presidency, his support for legalized abortion and embryonic stem-cell research inspired protests by the church and controversy within it. Some 80 U.S. bishops publicly criticized the University of Notre Dame for granting Obama an honorary degree in 2009.

Yet the Vatican itself remained largely aloof from such disputes, at least in public statements, and cooperated with the Obama administration on such common international goals as assisting migrants, working against human trafficking and preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS.

But seeing a threat to the freedom of the church itself, the Vatican changed its approach and chose to address matters more directly.

In January, Pope Benedict told a group of visiting U.S. bishops that he was concerned about "certain attempts being made to limit that most cherished of American freedoms, the freedom of religion," through "concerted efforts ... to deny the right of conscientious objection on the part of Catholic individuals and institutions with regard to cooperation in intrinsically evil practices."

Any hopes that the administration might change its policy to the satisfaction of the church grew faint as the year wore on and the election drew nearer, to the increasingly vocal frustration of several U.S. bishops.

Two days before Americans went to the polls, the papal nuncio to the U.S. made it clear how urgent a priority the nation's religious liberty had become at the highest levels of the universal church.

Speaking at the University of Notre Dame Nov. 4, Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò devoted most of a speech about "religious freedom, persecution of the church and martyrdom" to the situation of the United States today.

"The menace to religious liberty is concrete on many fronts," Archbishop Viganò said, noting the insurance mandate, anti-discrimination policies that require Catholic adoption agencies to place children with same-sex couples, and mandatory public school curricula that present same-sex marriage as "natural and wholesome."

Recalling persecution of Catholics in fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, the archbishop said that the "problems identified ... over six decades ago that deal with the heavy grip of the state's hand in authentic religious liberty are still with us today."

A government need not be a dictatorship in order to persecute the church, the nuncio said, quoting the words of Blessed John Paul II that a "democracy without values easily turns into openly or thinly disguised totalitarianism."

If the mere timing of his speech was not sufficient to underscore its political implications, Archbishop Viganò concluded by lamenting the support of Catholic politicians and voters for laws and policies that violate church teaching.

"We witness in an unprecedented way a platform being assumed by a major political party, having intrinsic evils among its basic principles, and Catholic faithful publicly supporting it," he said. "There is a divisive strategy at work here, an intentional dividing of the church; through this strategy, the body of the church is weakened, and thus the church can be more easily persecuted."

Jesuit Father Gerald P. Fogarty, a professor of history at the University of Virginia and an expert on U.S.-Vatican relations, said it is extremely rare for a papal diplomat to comment publicly on a host country's politics in such a way. The closest thing to a precedent in the U.S., Fogarty said, occurred nearly a century ago, during the Vatican's efforts to persuade belligerent nations to end World War I.

The archbishop's speech would seem to suggest that the Holy See has made religious liberty in the U.S. an issue in its diplomatic

relations with Washington. Yet Miguel H. Diaz, U.S. ambassador to the Vatican since 2009, said that the disagreements between the church and the Obama administration over the insurance mandate have not interfered with his efforts to cooperate with the Vatican on areas of common concern.

Asked whether such compartmentalization would be possible during Obama's second term, Diaz, who will step down in mid-November, voiced hope that current tensions, including the dispute over the insurance mandate, might be resolved soon.

"Perhaps my successor will not have the same kinds of issues" to contend with, he said, "because that person will likely have a whole set of different challenges."

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## A Baptist Preacher Goes to Church

AUGUST 21, 2012

*by Gordon Atkinson, pastor of Covenant Baptist Church in San Antonio, TX*

<http://journeytoorthodoxy.com/2012/08/21/a-baptist-preacher-goes-to-church-part-1/>

### Not for Lightweights

Last Sunday was the 4th of 13 in my sabbatical time. Each of them is precious to me. Each week I am choosing a place and a way to worship. I'm not a church tourist, hoping to see new things. I'm seeking spiritual experiences. I want to worship. Saturday night Jeanene and I still hadn't decided where to go. I experienced something common to our culture but new to me.

The "Where do you want to go to church – I don't know where do YOU want to go to church" conversation. I found the Saint Anthony the Great website. It's an Orthodox church that has beautiful Byzantine art in the sanctuary. We decided to go there. Shelby and Lillian went with us. On the way we warned them that this was going to be different.

*"They might not have changed their worship service much in a thousand years or so,"*

I told the girls. That was an understatement. Saint Anthony the Great isn't just old school. It's "styli and wax tablets" old school. We arrived ten minutes early for worship and the room was already filled with people lighting candles and

praying. There was one greeter. I said,

*"We don't know what to do."*

She handed me a liturgy book and waved us inside.

Pews? We don't need no stinking pews! Providing seats for worshipers is SO 14th century. Gorgeous Byzantine art, commissioned from a famous artist in Bulgaria. Fully robed priests with censers (those swinging incense thingies). Long, complex readings and chants that went on and on and on. And every one of them packed full of complex, theological ideas. It was like they were ripping raw chunks of theology out of ancient creeds and throwing them by the handfuls into the congregation. And just to make sure it wasn't too easy for us, everything was read in a monotone voice and at the speed of an auctioneer.

I heard words and phrases I had not heard since seminary. Theotokos, begotten not made, Cherubim and Seraphim borne on their pinions, supplications and oblations. It was an ADD kids nightmare. Robes, scary art, smoking incense, secret doors in the Iconostas popping open and little robed boys coming out with golden

candlesticks, chants and singing from a small choir that rolled across the curved ceiling and emerged from the other side of the room where no one was singing. The acoustics were wild. No matter who was speaking, the sound came out of everywhere. There was so much going on I couldn't keep up with all the things I couldn't pay attention to.

Lillian was the first to go down. After half an hour of standing, she was done. Jeanene took her over to a pew on the side wall. She slumped against Jeanene's shoulder and stared at me with this stunned, rather betrayed look on her face.

*"How could you have brought us to this insane place?"*

Shelby tried to tough it out. We were following along in the 40 page liturgy book that was only an abbreviation of the service we were experiencing. I got lost no less than 10 times. After 50 minutes Shelby leaned over and asked how much longer the service would be. I was trying to keep from locking my knees because my thighs had gotten numb. I showed her the book. We were on page 15. I flipped through the remaining 25 pages to show her how much more there was. Her mouth fell open.

*"Are you serious?"*

*"Yeah. And I think there's supposed to be a sermon in here somewhere."*

*"They haven't done the SERMON yet? What was that guy doing who said all that stuff about...all that stuff?"*

*"I don't know?" I said.*

*"I have to go to the bathroom," she said.*

I looked around and saw the door at the back of the sanctuary swinging shut. And then there was one.

I made it through the entire 1 hour and 50 minutes of worship without sitting down, but my back was sore. Shelby came back toward the end. When it came time for communion I suggested that we not participate because I didn't know what kind of rules they have for that. We stayed politely at the back. A woman noticed and brought some of the bread to us, bowing respectfully as she offered it. Her gesture of kindness to newcomers who were clearly struggling to understand everything was touching to me.

Okay, so I started crying a little. So what? You would have too, I bet. After it was over another woman came to speak with us. She said,

*"I noticed the girls were really struggling with having to stand."*

*"Yeah," I said. "This worship is not for lightweights."*

She laughed and said, "yes," not the least bit ashamed or apologetic. So what did I think about my experience at Saint Anthony the Great Orthodox Church? I LOVED IT. Loved it loved it loved it loved it loved it.

In a day when user-friendly is the byword of everything from churches to software, here was worship that asked something of me.

No, DEMANDED something of me.

*"You don't know what Theotokos means? Get a book and read about it. You have a hard time standing for 2 hours? Do some sit ups and get yourself into worship shape. It is the Lord our God we worship here, mortal. What made you think you could worship the Eternal One without pain?"*

See, I get that. That makes sense to me. I had a hard time following the words of the chants and liturgy, but even my lack of understanding had something to teach me.

*"There is so much for you to learn. There is more here than a person could master in a lifetime. THIS IS BIGGER THAN YOU ARE. Your understanding is not central here. These are ancient rites of the church. Stand with us, brother, and you will learn in time. Or go and find your way to an easier place if you must. God bless you on that journey. We understand, but this is the way we do church."*

I'm going back again on Sunday. I started to write,

*"I'm looking forward to it."*

But that's not right. I'm feeling right about it.

And feeling right is what I'm looking for.

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Sunday I went back to Saint Anthony the Great. Jeanene and the girls did other things, which was fine with me because I was wanting to keep my thoughts tuned to my experience and prayer.



I love my children, but when they are with me there is always a piece of me that is keeping tabs on them.

I was so excited too. Really very happy to be there and hopeful that perhaps the Eternal Creator might have something for his imperfect child to learn that day. Saint Anthony the Great has a coffee and conversation hour after the service, so I planned to stay for that as well.

The first week I was very interested in the candles that the faithful lit and put in boxes of sand near several of the icons. These were little tapered candles that burned down, conveniently, about the time the service was over. I asked the greeter if I might light a candle. She was surprised and seemed very happy.

*"Yes, of course," she said.*

She told me that the candles represented the light of Christ coming into the world. I feel that piece of faith is held in common with our church as well. We light candles for the same reason. I took my candle down front and prayed that I would be open to hearing from the Spirit of God during worship. I placed my candle with the others lit by various pilgrims at worship. For the entire service I kept an eye on my candle as it burned softly until it was only a tiny stub.

This week I decided not to spend any of my energy trying to keep up with the service in the liturgy book. Instead I wanted to watch everything and hear as much as I could. I found that I was able to follow the chants much better with only one week's experience under my belt. I fell in love with the sound of them. Various readers have different tones and particular styles. Everyone calls the pastor "Father" at Saint Anthony the Great. Father's voice came singing out from behind the Iconostas during the service. His voice is very resonant, and he has his own particular way of ending a phrase.

There is a step down in tone and then – just at the end – he lets the tone trail off even further. Dum dum dum dum doooooo...eeee. I am easily hypnotized by repetitive and interesting sounds. Once in college I was driven to a state of absolute peace by the sound of a woman cutting thick paper with a heavy set of scissors. SnnnnnnnnUP. I closed my books and sat there with my head in my hands until she finished whatever she was doing. I felt like I'd had a full massage. I think a lot of my peace on Sunday

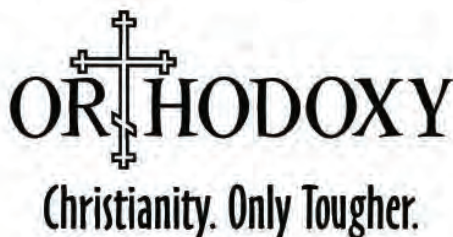
came from the simple fact that I didn't have to understand everything. I was not the minister or anyone with a burden of comprehending the whole. I was one of God's little ragamuffins, a kid who wandered in from the street. No one expected much of me, and I felt God would be pleased if I just stood quietly and enjoyed the sounds and the beauty while being mindful of God's presence.

This week I noticed people sitting down during the homily. A number of people dropped to the ground like the crowds around Jesus. I sat down with them, and let me tell you that after standing for an hour, a seat on the floor is more comforting and comfortable than the softest lounge chair in the world. Ahh, the floor. A chance to rest my back before the push to the end of the service. Blissful.

And then it was over. It seemed much too soon. I was a bit surprised that almost 2 hours had passed. I sat at the back and watched everyone file forward to greet Father, who hugged people and chatted. I got to wander around and look more closely at some of the icons too. Stunningly beautiful.

During coffee hour I had a delightful chat with an enthusiastic woman named Tina, who became an Orthodox Christian 15 years earlier. She knew a lot of church history. It was nice chatting with her. Some others came to say hello as well. In time it came out that I am a Baptist minister on sabbatical, which was surprising for them. But just for a moment. Everyone has a story about how they arrived at Saint Anthony the Great.

That was my story. And it was okay.



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Christianity. Only Tougher.



**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 Few Thoughts on Giving Thanks*

Gratitude is a sign of noble souls. *Aesop*

Some complain that God put thorns among roses; others give thanks that God put roses among thorns. *Anonymous*

Sing to God with thanksgiving in your hearts.  
Colossians 3:16

God has two dwellings. One is in heaven; the other in a meek and thankful heart.

*Izaak Walton*

The worst moment for an atheist is when he or she is grateful and doesn't know who to thank.  
*Dante Gabriel Rossetti*

I will proclaim his greatness by giving him thanks. *Psalms 69:30*

Sing praise to the Lord, all his faithful people!  
Remember what the Holy One has done,  
and give him thanks! *Psalms 30:4*

For the flowers  
that bloom about our feet;  
For tender grass so fresh and sweet;  
For song of bird and hum of bee;  
For all things we hear and see,  
Father in heaven, we thank thee.

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

What can I offer the Lord for all his goodness to me? *Psalms 116:12*

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, always  
give thanks for everything to God the Father.  
*Ephesians 5:30*