

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of the Prophet Habakkuk and Others -- December 2nd

THE HOLY MARTYRS NICANDER, BISHOP OF MYRA, AND HERMAS, PRIEST

For All Parishioners



Please attend! Будьмо Уважні!

Christmas Flowers: \$55.00

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.

Christmas 'Round The World

BENEFIT CONCERT

Supporting the
**Ukrainian Catholic Education
Foundation**
and the **Ukrainian Catholic University.**

Featuring the combined Ukrainian Choirs of
Kobzar, Yevshan, Koliada, and Trembita
along with the
Los Angeles Doctors Symphony Orchestra.

Special Master of Ceremonies
Fr. Edward Danylo Evanko,
Star of Broadway Musicals, Film and Television.
Plus Surprise Celebrity Guest Soloists.

Saturday, December 8, 2012 at 2 pm
Wilshire Ebell Theatre
743 South Lucerne Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90005

For tickets contact the Theatre Box Office at
(323) 931-1277
or call our Ticket Hotline at (909) 860-2102
you can also order online at:
TicketsR.com



Greeting Cards

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

St. Nicholas Celebration

Mark your Calendars! On Sunday, December 16th we will welcome St. Nicholas on his annual visit to our parish:

- Following the Liturgy there will be a Potluck meal. ***Due to serious allergies among our fellow parishioners, please do NOT bring items with nuts (especially peanuts and walnuts) or mushrooms.***
- Parents please note: «Небесна Канцелярія» (The Heavenly Office) will be open starting at 9:00 AM. Please see Pani Olena in the Pastor's Office. Please limit packages to 1 per child with a maximum value of \$25.00.
- **We need volunteers** to help decorate the hall for the St. Nicholas Celebration. We will begin at 9:00 AM Wednesday, December 5th.



Fasting also partners with prayer, almsgiving and confession, making the whole person ready like an athlete, body, mind, and soul, for an upcoming feast, similar to the way in which Orthodox Christians would hope to be properly prepared for the Second Coming.



2013 Liturgical Calendars are available in the parish hall. A special "Thank You" to *Goodbody Mortuary* for one again sponsoring our calendars. The calendar gives the appointed scriptures readings for each day of the year.

Read the scripture daily!

The Importance of Sunday

By Metropolitan Methodios of Boston

Sadly, Sunday has lost its significance in our society, becoming less of a day of worship of almighty God and more like any ordinary work day. This especially affects our young people who are obligated to attend sports events on Sunday mornings rather than attend the Divine Liturgy. At my request, this sad reality and its ramifications were discussed at the recent meeting of the Orthodox-Roman Catholic Consultation. After lengthy discussion, the following joint statement was issued. I ask you to read it carefully and approach civic, business and school authorities in your community to schedule sports events after 12 noon so that our young people may worship together with their families on Sunday mornings.

The Importance of Sunday

The North American Orthodox-Catholic
Theological Consultation

Saint Paul's College, Washington, DC

October 27, 2012

Recovering the theological significance of Sunday is fundamental to rebalancing our lives. As Orthodox and Catholics, we share a theological view of Sunday and so our purpose in this statement is four-fold: to offer a caring response to what is not just a human, but also a theological question; to add a little more volume to the growing chorus of Christian voices trying to be heard in the din of our non-stop worklife; to offer brief reflections in hopes of drawing attention to the fuller expositions elsewhere; and to reinforce the ecumenical consensus by speaking as Orthodox and Catholics with one voice.

For Christians, Sunday, the Lord's Day, is a special day consecrated to the service and worship of God. It is a unique Christian festival. It is "the day the Lord has made" (Ps. 117 (118):24). Its nature is holy and joyful. Sunday is the day on which we believe God acted decisively to liberate the world from the tyranny of sin, death, and corruption through the Holy Resurrection of Jesus.

The primacy of Sunday is affirmed by the liturgical

practice of the early church. St. Justin the Martyr writing around 150 AD notes that "it is on Sunday that we assemble because Sunday is the first day, the day on which God transformed darkness and matter and created the world and the day that Jesus Christ rose from the dead (First Apology, 67)." Sunday has always had a privileged position in the life of the church as a day of worship and celebration. On Sunday the Church assembles to realize her eschatological fullness in the Eucharist by which the Kingdom and the endless Day of the Lord are revealed in time. It is the perpetual first day of the new creation, a day of rejoicing. It is a day for community, feasting and family gatherings.

As we look at our fellow Christians and our society, we observe that everyone is short of time and stressed. One reason is that many of us have forgotten the meaning of Sunday, and with it the practices that regularly renewed our relationships and lives. More and more Christian leaders see the effects of a 24/7 worklife and ask "Where is the time of rest?" As members of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation, gathered October 25-27, 2012, we add our combined voice to their call.

Our purpose here is not to replace or replicate their message; it is to underscore and point to it. Anyone who looks at the 1998 Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini* (The Lord's Day) of Pope John Paul II and its cascade of patristic quotations will see there is already a feast of food for thought on the meaning of Sunday. Anyone who reads the recent book *Sunday, Sabbath, and the Weekend* (2010, Edward O'Flaherty, ed.) will see there is also strong ecumenical consensus on the need to recover the meaning of Sunday-- not just for our souls, but for our bodies, our hearts, and our minds as well.

Sadly Sunday has become less of a day of worship and family and more like an ordinary work day. Shopping, sports, and work squeeze out the chance for a day of worship or rest in the Christian sense. By abandoning Sunday worship we lose out on the

regenerative powers that flow out of the liturgical assembly. And when Sunday becomes detached from its theological significance, it becomes just part of a weekend and people can lose the chance to see transcendent meaning for themselves and their lives (The Lord's Day, 4).

Sunday is more than just the first day of the week. In our faith we see how it is the ultimate day of new beginnings: "It is Easter which returns week by week, celebrating Christ's victory over sin and death, the fulfillment in him of the first creation and the dawn of "the new creation" (cf. 2 Cor 5:17). It is the day which recalls in grateful adoration the world's first day and looks forward in active hope to "the last day", when Christ will come in glory (cf. Acts 1:11; 1 Th 4:13-17) and all things will be made new (cf. Rev 21:5. The Lord's Day, 1)."

Sunday even unlocks the mystery of time itself, for "...in commemorating the day of Christ's Resurrection not just once a year but every Sunday, the Church seeks to indicate to every generation the true fulcrum of history, to which the mystery of the world's origin and its final destiny leads (The Lord's Day, 2)." The Lord's Day is the day after the last day of the week and so it symbolizes eternity as well: what St. Augustine calls "a peace with no evening (Confessions 13:50)." St. Basil the Great in his Treatise on the Holy Spirit writes, "Sunday seems to be an image of the age to come... This day foreshadows the state which is to follow the present age: a day without sunset, nightfall or successor, an age which does not grow old or come to an end (On the Holy Spirit 26:77)."

The apostolic letter of Pope John Paul II calls it a day of joy, rest, and solidarity. Joy there is, because the disciples are always glad to see the Master. God scripturally established a day of rest as a gift to us, and rest there must be for every human person. Rest is built into our nature and also withdraws us "... from the sometimes excessively demanding cycle of earthly tasks in order to renew [our] awareness that everything is the work of God. There is a risk that the prodigious power over creation which God gives to man can lead him to forget that God is the

Creator upon whom everything depends. It is all the more urgent to recognize this dependence in our own time, when science and technology have so incredibly increased the power which man exercises through his work. Finally, it should not be forgotten that even in our own day work is very oppressive for many people, either because of miserable working conditions and long hours — especially in the poorer regions of the world — or because of the persistence in economically more developed societies of too many cases of injustice and exploitation of man by man (The Lord's Day, 65,66)."

As members of the Consultation, we strongly urge both clergy and laity to work cooperatively within their communities to stress the importance of Sunday for worship and family. Foremost we call for all to render thanks to God and render love towards one another — and be willing to reserve time to do both — and avail ourselves of the riches of the Lord's Day. Appropriate authorities can be approached to schedule sports activities after 12 noon in order to give young athletes and their family the opportunity to worship on Sunday morning. We call for our children to live in a timescape that respects the God-given rhythm of the week.

"Yes, let us open our time to Christ, that he may cast light upon it and give it direction. He is the One who knows the secret of time and the secret of eternity, and he gives us "his day" as an ever new gift of his love. The rediscovery of this day is a grace which we must implore, not only so that we may live the demands of faith to the full, but also so that we may respond concretely to the deepest human yearnings. Time given to Christ is never time lost, but is rather time gained, so that our relationships and indeed our whole life may become more profoundly human (The Lord's Day, 7)."



An Eastern Christian Lexicon - What does that word mean?

INCARNATION refers to Jesus Christ coming “in the flesh”. The eternal Son of God the Father assumed to Himself a complete human nature from the Virgin Mary. He was (and is) one divine Person, fully possessing from God the Father the entirety of the divine nature, and in His coming in the flesh fully possessing a human nature from the Virgin Mary. By His Incarnation, the Son forever possesses two natures in His one Person. The Son of God, limitless in His divine nature, voluntarily and willingly accepted limitation in His humanity in which He experienced hunger, thirst, fatigue -- and ultimately, death. The Incarnation is indispensable to Christianity -- there is no Christianity without it. The Scriptures record, “...every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God” (*1 John 4:3*). By His Incarnation, the Son of God redeemed human nature, a redemption made accessible to all who are joined to Him in His glorified humanity.

SIN literally means to “miss the mark.” As St. Paul writes, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (*Romans 3:23*). We sin when we pervert what God has given us as good, falling short of His purposes for us. Our sins separate us from God (*Isaiah 59:1, 2*), leaving us spiritually dead (*Ephesians 2:1*). To save us, the Son of God assumed our humanity, and being without sin “He condemned sin in the flesh” (*Romans 8:3*). In His mercy, God forgives our sins when we confess them and turn from them, giving us strength to overcome sin in our lives. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (*1 John 1:9*).

SALVATION is the divine gift through which men and women are delivered from sin and death, united to Christ, and brought into His eternal kingdom. Those who heard St. Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost asked what they must do to be saved. He answered, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (*Acts 2:38*). Salvation begins with these three steps: 1) repent, 2) be baptized, and 3) receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. To repent means to change our mind about how we have been, to turn from our sin and to commit ourselves to Christ. To be baptized means to be born again by being joined into union with Christ. And to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit means to receive the Spirit Who empowers us to enter a new life in Christ, to be nurtured in the Church, and to be conformed to God’s image.

Salvation demands faith in Jesus Christ. People cannot save themselves by their own good works. Salvation is “faith working through love”. It is an ongoing, life-long process. Salvation is past tense in that, through the death and Resurrection of Christ, we have been saved. It is present tense, for we are “being saved” by our active participation through faith in our union with Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Salvation is also future, for we must yet be saved at His glorious Second Coming.

BAPTISM is the way in which a person is actually united to Christ. The experience of salvation is initiated in the waters of baptism. The Apostle Paul teaches in *Romans 6: 1-6* that in baptism we experience Christ’s death and resurrection. In it our sins are truly forgiven and we are energized by our union with Christ to live a holy life. The Orthodox Church practices baptism by full immersion.

Currently, some consider baptism to be only an “outward sign” of belief in Christ. This innovation has no historical or biblical precedent. Others reduce it to a mere perfunctory obedience to Christ’s command (cf. *Matthew 28:19, 20*). Still others, ignoring the Bible completely, reject baptism as a vital factor in salvation. Orthodoxy maintains that these contemporary innovations rob sincere people of the most important assurances that baptism provides -- namely that they have been united to Christ and are part of His Church.

NEW BIRTH is receipt of new life. It is how we gain entrance into God’s kingdom and His Church. Jesus said, “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (*John 3:5*). From its beginning, the Church has taught that the “water” is the baptismal water and the “Spirit” is the Holy Spirit. The new birth occurs in baptism where we die with Christ, are buried with Him, and are raised with Him in the newness of His resurrection, being joined into union with Him in His glorified humanity (*Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3, 4*). The idea that being “born again” is a religious experience disassociated from baptism is a recent one and has no biblical basis whatsoever.

JUSTIFICATION is a word used in the Scriptures to mean that in Christ we are forgiven and actually made righteous in our living. Justification is not a once-for-all, instantaneous pronouncement guaranteeing eternal salvation, regardless of how wickedly a person might live from that point on. Neither is it merely a legal declaration that an unrighteous person is righteous. Rather, justification

is a living, dynamic, day-to-day reality for the one who follows Christ. The Christian actively pursues a righteous life in the grace and power of God granted to all who continue to believe in Him.

SANCTIFICATION is being set apart for God. It involves us in the process of being cleansed and made holy by Christ in the Holy Spirit. We are called to be saints and to grow into the likeness of God. Having been given the gift of the Holy Spirit, we actively participate in sanctification. We cooperate with God, we work together with Him, that we may know Him, becoming by grace what He is by nature.

THE BIBLE is the divinely inspired Word of God (*II Timothy 3:16*), and is a crucial part of God's self-revelation to the human race. The Old Testament tells the history of that revelation from Creation through the Age of the Prophets. The New Testament records the birth and life of Jesus as well as the writings of His Apostles. It also includes some of the history of the early Church and especially sets forth the Church's apostolic doctrine. Though these writings were read in the Churches from the time they first appeared, the earliest listings of all the New Testament books exactly as we know them today, is found in the 33rd Canon of a local council held at Carthage in 318, and in a fragment of St. Athanasius of Alexandria's Festal Letter in 367. Both sources list all of the books of the New Testament without exception. A local council, probably held at Rome in 382, set forth a complete list of the canonical books of both the Old and New Testaments. The Scriptures are at the very heart of Orthodox worship and devotion.

WORSHIP is to render praise, glory, and thanksgiving to God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. All humanity is called to worship God. Worship is more than being in the "great-out-of-doors", or listening to a sermon, or singing a hymn. God can be known in His creation, but that doesn't constitute worship. And as helpful as sermons may be, they can never offer a proper substitute for worship. Most prominent in Orthodox worship is the corporate praise, thanksgiving, and glory given to God by the Church. This worship is consummated in intimate communion with God at His Holy Table.

As is said in the Liturgy, "To Thee is due all glory, honor, and worship, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen." In that worship we touch and experience His eternal kingdom, the age to come, and we join in adoration with the heavenly hosts. We experience the glory of fulfillment of all things in Christ, as truly all in all.

EUCCHARIST means "thanksgiving" and early became a synonym for Holy Communion. The Eucharist is the center of worship in the Orthodox Church. Because Jesus said of the bread and wine at the Last Supper, "This is my body", "This is my blood", and "Do this in remembrance of Me" (*Luke 22: 19,20*), His followers believe -- and do -- nothing less. In the Eucharist, we partake mystically of Christ's Body and Blood, which impart His life and strength to us. The celebration of the Eucharist was a regular part of the Church's life from its beginning. Early Christians began calling the Eucharist "the medicine of immortality" because they recognized the great grace of God that was received in it.

LITURGY is a term used to describe the shape or form of the Church's corporate worship of God. The word *liturgy* derives from a Greek word which means "the common work," or "work of the people". All the biblical references to worship in heaven involve liturgy.

In the Old Testament, God ordered a liturgy, or specific pattern of worship. We find it described in detail in the books of Exodus and Leviticus. In the New Testament we find the Church carrying over the worship of the Old Testament Israel as expressed in both the synagogue and the temple, adjusting them in keeping with their fulfillment in Christ. The Orthodox Liturgy, which developed over many centuries, still maintains that ancient shape of worship. The main elements in the Liturgy include hymns, the reading and proclamation of the Gospel, prayers, and the Eucharist itself. For Orthodox Christians, the expressions "The Liturgy" or "Divine Liturgy" refer to the eucharistic rite instituted by Christ Himself at the Last (Mystical) Supper.

COMMUNION OF SAINTS: When Christians depart this life, they remain a vital part of the Church, the body of Christ. They are alive in the Lord and "registered in heaven" (*Hebrews 12:23*). They worship God (*Revelation 4:10*) and inhabit His heavenly dwelling places (*John 14:2*). In the Eucharist we come "to the city of the living God" and join in communion with the saints in our worship of God (*Hebrews 12:22*). They are that "great cloud of witnesses" which surrounds us, and we seek to imitate them in running "the race set before us" (*Hebrews 12:1*). Rejecting or ignoring the communion of saints is a denial of the fact that those who have died in Christ are still part of his holy Church.



**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква
Святого Йоана Хрестителя
St. John the Baptizer
Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church**

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We Pray as We Live

For prayer to have the fervor and the purity it ought, certain conditions are necessary.

First of all, suppress any kind of desire for the things of the flesh. Then, shut the doors of the spirit not only to anxiety, but even to the recalling of any kind of business matters or affairs. Next, renounce evil speaking, vain words, long high-sounding discourses, scurrilous witticisms. Conquer the agitation that comes from anger or melancholy. Cut off greed and attachment to money at the roots.

After we have destroyed these vices, not to mention other defects equally serious and evident, after we have made this purification which results in simplicity and innocence, we ought to lay solid foundations for a deep humility capa-

ble of supporting a tower that reaches to heaven. After that, there is the building of the spiritual edifice of the virtues.

Finally, it is necessary to prevent the soul being allowed to wander off into distractions and anything that would divert it from its aim. Only then will it begin to be exalted to the contemplation of God and to the intuition of spiritual realities.

In fact, everything that we have in our minds before the time of prayer is inevitably brought back by memory when we are praying. So whatever kind of people we want to be in our prayer time, we need to be before we begin to pray.

St. John Cassian