

SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY



Icon of Saints Dominica, George, and Elladius -- January 8th



January 8, 2017

SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY

OUR VENERABLE FATHER GEORGE THE CHOZEBITE;

OUR VENERABLE MOTHER DOMINICA; THE HOLY FATHER AND CONFESSOR EMILIAN

TONE 1

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF JANUARY 9 – JANUARY 15

SATURDAY, JANUARY 14 – *LEAVE TAKING OF THEOPHANY; THE VENERABLE MARTYRS SLAIN AT SINAI AND RAITHO; THE PASSING OF THE HOLY EQUAL-TO-THE-APOSTLES NINA, ENLIGHTENER OF GEORGIA*

6:00 PM – GREAT VESPERS

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15 – *35TH AFTER PENTECOST; OUR VENERABLE FATHERS PAUL OF THEBES AND JOHN THE HUT-DWELLER*

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners

BEING CLOSE TO GOD BY GOING TO CHURCH:

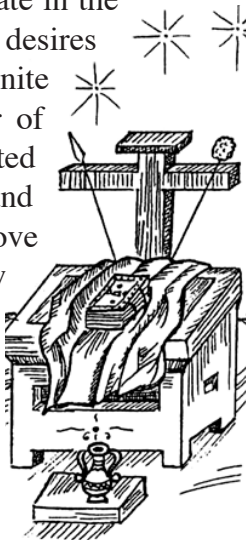
WHY DO WE STRESS CHURCH ATTENDANCE?

Adapted from Hieromonk John (Anderson)

The Church is literally the Body of Christ. This means that corporately, not individually, we are Christ Himself still incarnate in the world doing His work. If a person desires with their whole heart one can unite to Christ and become a member of His Body. Ideally, this is motivated by a simple desire to know God and to be where He is. Out of this love for God comes the desire to follow his commands and to worship Him. However, this happens in a context which is not our own.

Catholicism and Orthodoxy maintain the ancient Jewish belief that God is manifest in the temple. We believe that the same glorious presence of God, the Shekinah Glory, that dwelt on the Ark of the Covenant now resides on each altar in every Catholic and Orthodox Temple. “God is with us, understand

all ye nations.” Isaiah 8:10, as the hymn from Great Compline says. If we truly understood what this means -- that the God “who is a consuming fire” is literally present in the Church -- we would strive to worship before Him frequently.



Church attendance is not merely about **obligation, guilt, language or nostalgia**. It is about being where the beloved is and worshipping Him simply because we love Him. It is about being the Body of Christ in oneness. By going to Church we learn to **lay aside ego**, we learn to love, we learn to live, and we learn how to be truly human. Christ Himself told us to make God the absolute center of our lives and to make all else secondary. Eternal life begins at the altar where we remain in His Presence without distractions, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Matt 6:21.

Неділя після Богоявлення

У сьогоднішньому Євангелії, говорячи «покайтесь» (Мт. 4, 17), Ісус звертається до нас. Коли ми в Нього охрестилися, то одягнулися в Нього, «зодягнулися у світло» (див. Гал. 3, 27), як ми співали сьогодні на Божественній літургії. Як же не замислитися щиро про те, що в нас перебуває Ісус і Його світло, разом з Отцем, Який є джерелом світла та Його Духом істини, що світить для нас. Саме завдяки Божій присутності в нас ми стаємо новою людиною, віднаходимо ту вічну сутність, закладену в нас від початку. То ж Ісус запитує нас: «Чому ж ви продовжуєте жити назовні, у сутінках, в нерішучості, у ваганні, у поверховому безрадісному житті? Покайтесь, визнайте, що не маєте рації, наверніться!».

Найперше, що слід зробити для навернення, – це увійти, глибоко зануритися до свого серця та охреститися в світлі Христовому, тобто в присутності Ісуса всередині нас. Ми добре знаємо, але чомусь забуваємо, коли йдеться про Нього, що коли хтось перебуває в сутінках, він немов відсутній, тоді як на світлі присутність добре видно. Але світло – це тиша, і тому нам страшно увиходити в себе. Наше «я» таке шумне і розбурхане, що мовчати йому нестерпно. Постановімо найперше увійти до свого серця, занурмося у світлу присутність Христа в ньому. Ми стаємо присутніми водночас перед ним і перед самими собою.

У пошуках Його світла ми зможемо слухати Його. Це звучить парадоксально, але для того, щоб навернутися до світла Христового, треба спочатку слухати Його, слухати Його слово. Коли хтось кличе нас, ми звертаємо до нього свій погляд. Ісус, Слово Отця, є світлом, як говорить нам про це Йоан Богослов у пролозі (див. Йо. 1, 4; 9). Він є світлом, бо Він – слово Отця. Нам треба подивитися на того, хто говорить до нас, звернути очі нашого серця до Його обличчя, адже Він перебуває в нас. Мусимо розплющити очі, бо, слухаючи, ми починаємо уважно дивитися. Слухання серцем наповнить нас світлом, у тиші все

повернеться до справжнього, набере свого сенсу. Саме через такий погляд, через таке слухання Святий Дух зійшов і перебуває на Ісусі в Його хрещенні, і так само сходить на нас у нашому хрещенні. Він перебуває в нас безперестанно, аби провадити нас, робити нас уважними до Ісуса, до ближніх. Таке навернення ми можемо переживати у будь-який момент дня.

До чого нас це провадить? Ісус сказав до нас у сьогоднішньому Євангелії: «Покайтесь, бо Небесне Царство близько» (Мт. 4, 17). Як розуміти «Небесне Царство»? Йдеться про цілком нове ставлення до інших, про людяність, наповнену Божою присутністю. А бути насправду поряд з Ним ми можемо саме через навернення серця до світла. Між нами й іншими завжди є тінь нашого «я»! Святий Дух може випростати, просвітити нашу оцінку інших людей, адже наші судження такі заплутані, вони йдуть услід за нашими емоціями, інтересами, потребою самозахисту чи ще за чимось. А проте у хрещенні отримуємо прозорливість! Мусимо навчитися від Духа істини цінувати, оцінювати маленькі щоденні події, а не лише події значні, в яких ми і так нічого не змінимо. Треба просити у Святого Духа «духовного відновлення нашого ума», як пише апостол Павло у своєму посланні (див. Еф. 4, 23).

Коли ми перебуваємо перед іншими у світлі, наше серце відкривається, і ми можемо ходити в світлі, як каже Йоан Богослов, а «коли ходимо у світлі, як Він сам – у світлі, ми маємо спільність один з одним» (1 Йо. 1, 7). Це і є Царство Боже. Єднання Бога у Пресвятій Тройці стає нашим єднанням. І тому Царство Боже зовсім близько. Воно дароване нам. Нехай світло, яке перебуває в нас, струменить із глибини наших сердець. Так, Бог є світло, бо Він – любов (див. 1 Йо 4, 16). То ж навернімося до Його світла, і Його любов буде нашим життям.

Жан Корбон, *Це називається світанком*,
Львів, Свічадо 2007

THE STANDARD OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

By Fr. Thomas Hopko

The norm for non-monastic Christians is to be moderate in our possessions, to have only what is absolutely necessary, to give away more than we need in concrete acts of mercy, and thereby to be godly and spiritually free. The question, of course, is about what and how much are truly necessary. What do we really need? How much is enough? Each of us will have to decide for ourselves and our families, as well as our churches and nations. We can do this only by the Holy Spirit's power, with the guidance of Scripture, participation in the Church's liturgical and sacramental life, the reading of the lives of the saints, and the counsel of wise and loving pastors and elders in the faith.

House Blessings

It is our custom to have our homes blessed with the holy water sanctified on Theophany (the feast which commemorates the Baptism of the Lord in the Jordan River). If you would like your home blessed please let Fr. James know. If you have any questions about house blessings, what is involved, why we bless our homes, etc., please speak with Fr. James.

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.



What if Church was your New Year's Resolution?

We are Called to Bear Fruit

At the Last Supper, as we read in Chapter 15 of the Gospel of John, Jesus instructed His disciples, "I Am the Vine; you are the branches." He was telling us that the purpose of our abiding in Him is that we may bear fruit for God in the world. "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit..." (John 15:8). Just as the vine bears fruit only through its branches, so Jesus has chosen to work in the world through us. We are the members of His body – the branches through which the Vine must bear fruit. We bear fruit when we serve and support God and His Church.



What is Christian Stewardship?

Christian Stewardship is...

- learning how to be a responsible and concerned caretaker of Christ's Church; it is learning how to enjoy Church life and be happy in Church work., for in Her dwells the fullness of the Spirit of God.
- our active commitment to use all our time, talent and treasure for the benefit of humankind in grateful acknowledgment of Christ's redeeming love.
- caring for the needs of others.
- offering one's self to God as He offered Himself to us.
- what a person does after saying "I believe...", as proof of that belief.
- devotion and service to God and His Church as persons, as families, as eparchy, as Church within a nation, and as Church universal.

Have you filled out your pledge card?

I give an offering on a regular basis. Why is it important that I pledge?

Answer: All offerings are appreciated; however, pledges are important to permit our parish to budget each year. We are planning a balanced budget, and we will use pledges for estimating revenue.

Does our parish receive financial support from the Eparchy?

Answer: No. The Eparchy provides certain non-financial resources but no financial support. Our parish is assessed a yearly sum (*Cathedraticum*) to support the operation of the Eparchy.

How much should I pledge? Is there a specific required or recommended percentage of income?

Answer: We ask members and other supporters to be generous with their pledges, taking into account the value of our parish and the importance of its mission. There is no required percentage of income; however, for this coming year, we are asking you to consider a goal of eventually pledging 5-10% of income.

If I want to pledge, how do I do it?

Answer: You can place your pledge card in the offering basket, or mail in your pledge card.

Can others see my pledge amounts, or is it confidential?

Answer: The amount of your pledge is confidential and is viewed only by the pastor and the financial committee. As part of their follow up efforts, the members of the Stewardship Committee will know who has pledged or not (but not the amount)

Is my pledge an enforceable contract? What if I am uncertain about the future and am reluctant to pledge?

Answer: Your pledge is not an enforceable contract. Although we ask that all pledges be a reflection of a real intent to give, if you have a change in circumstance, you can change your pledge at any time during the year by submitting a revised pledge card.

Does the amount of my pledge or offering affect my standing in the parish?

Answer: No. Neither membership nor opportunities to serve are conditioned upon your pledging a certain amount or at all.

When the offering basket is passed around, I notice that some don't put anything in. Why?

Answer: There are many ways to pledge and give. Some of our parishioners are pledging and donating electronically, so there is no need to place a check or money in the offering basket. Others may give an offering only periodically.



How you
can tell when
you've really
celebrated
Theophany!

TRAVELING ICON OF OUR LADY OF POCHAIV

Why is it called the Traveling Icon?

Each week beginning next Sunday immediately following the Divine Liturgy, the Traveling Icon of Our Lady of Pochaiv will be formally passed from one family to the next. The recipient family will display the Icon throughout the week in their home and pray with it, as a family, once a day—total time about 15 minutes per day. The suggested prayers will be provided, along with scripture readings for each day.



daily amongst us. The goal is to encourage and enrich the daily prayer life of each parishioner and their family.

What if I'm single and/or live alone?

By all means, sign up for the Traveling Icon. Venerating the Icon is appropriate for individuals as well as families. Also, Fr. James will deliver the Traveling Icon to those parishioners who are homebound or otherwise unable to attend Liturgy.

Why are we doing this?

The purpose of the Traveling Icon is to recognize and encourage family unity. It is one element of a vibrant parish, and dovetails with the desire of our Bishops to encourage more time spent in prayer. The Icon will help bring the family together at least once each day in prayer, thus allowing the Holy Spirit to be present

How do I participate?

There will be a signup sheet in the back of the Church. Please sign up for a week to ensure there are no blanks. Volunteer for one or more weeks today!



**A PRAYER BEFORE READING OR
LISTENING TO THE WORD OF GOD**

By St. John Chrysostom

O Lord Jesus Christ, open the eyes of my heart, that I may hear Your word and understand and do Your will, for I am a sojourner upon the earth. Hide not Your commandments from me, but open mine eyes, that I may perceive the wonders of Your law. Speak unto me the hidden and secret things of Your wisdom. On You do I set my hope, O my God, that You shalt enlighten my mind and understanding with the light of Your knowledge, not only to cherish those things which are written, but to do them; that in reading the lives and sayings of the saints I may not sin, but that such may serve for my restoration, enlightenment and sanctification, for the salvation of my soul, and the inheritance of life everlasting. For You are the enlightenment of those who lie in darkness, and from You comes every good deed and every gift. Amen.

**PARISH COMMITTEES
FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

Myra Heltsley
Stephen Hojsan
Maria Hughes

PASTORAL COUNCIL:

Vladimir Bachynsky
Olena Bankston
Gabriel Espedal
Mark Hartman
Luke Miller

**STEWARDSHIP (FUNDRAISING)
COMMITTEE:**

Susan Avant
John Heltsley (*fundraising consultant*)

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Olena Bankston
Olga Fedunyak
Mary Kitt
Michael Miller
Olga Miller
Lubomyra Yoldas

WHAT IS A FIRST-PORTION GIVER?

A First-Portion Giver is a believer who offers a first-portion of his time, talent, and financial resources out of grateful recognition of the fact that all he has, he holds in trust from God.



TIME

A First Portion Giver offers a first portion of his *time*.

“Let us spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing. But let us encourage one another...”

Hebrews 10:24-25



TALENT

A First Portion Giver offers a first portion of his *talent*.

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.”

1 Corinthians 12:4-6



RESOURCES

A First Portion Giver offers a first portion of his *treasure*.

“Concerning the collection for the saints..., on the first day of the week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in proportion to the income God has given you...”

1 Corinthians 16:2



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

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Parish Office: (619) 697-5085

Website: stjohnthebaptizer.org

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

The Gift of the Holy Spirit to All Mankind

In a plan of surpassing beauty the Creator of the universe decreed the renewal of all things in Christ. In His design for restoring human nature to its original condition, He gave a promise that He would pour out on it the Holy Spirit along with His other gifts, for otherwise our nature could not enter once more into the peaceful and secure possession of those gifts.

He therefore appointed a time for the Holy Spirit to come upon us: this was the time of Christ's coming. He gave this promise when He said: In those days, that is, the days of the Savior, I will pour out a share of my Spirit on all mankind.

The Only-begotten Son received the

Spirit, but not for His own advantage, for the Spirit is His, and is given in Him and through Him, as we have already said. He receives it to renew our nature in its entirety and to make it whole again, for in becoming man He took our entire nature to Himself. If we reason correctly, and use also the testimony of Scripture, we can see that Christ did not receive the Spirit for Himself, but rather for us in Him; for it is also through Christ that all gifts come down to us.

Saint Cyril of Alexandria

**For more information on Eastern spirituality, visit
www.ecpubs.com**