

THIRTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
FIFTEENTH SUNDAY OF LUKE



Icon of Saints Anastasius and Timothy -- January 22nd



January 22, 2017

36TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – TONE 3

THE HOLY APOSTLE TIMOTHY; THE VENERABLE MARTYR ANASTASIUS THE PERSIAN

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF JANUARY 23 – JANUARY 29

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28 – *OUR VENERABLE FATHER EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN*
6:00 PM – GREAT VESPERS

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29 – *THE SUNDAY OF ZACCHAEUS; THE TRANSLATION OF THE RELICS OF THE HOLY
HIEROMARTYR IGNATIUS THE GOD-BEARER*
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners

THANK YOU!

Thank You! too all those who decorated the hall, prepared and served the food, decorated the hall, cleaned up, and took care of all the things needed to make last week's event a resounding success.

Дякую! to Olha Fedunyak for organizing and directing the Vertep. She and the whole performing group deserve our thanks as well. Bravo!

Thank You! To Luke Miller for his tireless work pulling together and directing the San Diego contingent of Kobzar Choir. Thanks to all the singers for their wonderful performance of various Christmas Carols. You blessed us all with your performance.

Thank You! to all who came together and celebrated the Nativity season with us.

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! (Ps 133:1)

Оце яке добре та гарне яке, щоб жити братам однокупно! (Псалми 133:1)

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.

Please Note:

When you are away, please don't forget that the church still relies on your contributions. Our bills do not go on vacation. Your absence on any Sunday does not negate your obligation to support your home parish.

Upcoming Events:

- JANUARY 29** – SUNDAY OF ZACCHAEUS
FEBRUARY 5 – SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE
FEBRUARY 12 – SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON
FEBRUARY 19 – SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT (MEATFARE)
FEBRUARY 26 – SUNDAY OF THE EXPULSION FROM PARADISE (CHEESEFARE)
CHEESY POTLUCK
FORGIVENESS VESPERS
FEBRUARY 27 – FIRST DAY OF THE GREAT FAST (LENT)

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.

Warm Welcome!

We warmly welcome all of our visitors!
It's good to have you with us!

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.



PARISHIONERS THAT ARE HOME BOUND



If you or a loved one cannot make it to Church, Fr. James would be more than pleased visit at your home, in the hospital, at a nursing home, or any other place. It is no inconvenience at all.

Please be sure to schedule a visit.

GIFTS AND TALENTS AND THE ROAD TO HELL

Fr. Stephen Freeman

At some point in my past, there was a survey used in parishes that was all the rage. It was a “gifts and talents” survey, designed to make everyone in the parish find their true ministry and to work together in fulfillment of St. Paul’s description of the Body of Christ in 1 Corinthians. The key in these surveys was to determine precisely what gifts and talents someone had, match them with the right ministry, and fit them all together. The end product would be more effective ministry for the parish and happier parishioners. What priest wouldn’t want such a thing?

Of course the draw-back to this scheme was the imponderables. People are not just gifts and talents – they come with issues – with encumbered lives and broken gifts. The gifted singer can also be deeply dishonest or frightened (or what have you). The same is true for the whole parish – including the priest.

Another problem can be found in the notion of an *effective* parish. What does this mean? In Evangelical and mainline Protestant circles, where the surveys originated and flourished, the effective parish was often measured in numbers – parish growth and greater stewardship. A happy parish, a growing parish was a prosperous parish, and a prosperous parish was a successful parish. But these are just cultural notions – standards that would apply just as well to a business. They are not appropriate ways of looking at the Body of Christ.

The successful parish is an American invention. Originally, parishes were neighborhood and village Churches, existing to serve the population of a particular area. There was just the Church – not the Orthodox Church, the Catholic Church, the Baptist Church, just the Church. Of course, that Church was originally the Orthodox Church (or the Orthodox Catholic Church, let’s say). But with the modern migrations and various historical upheavals, Church became a purveyor of religion – offering similar products (a worshipping community) but in direct competition with the purveyor down the street.

When Orthodoxy first came to America and Western Europe, it found this arrangement to be foreign to its ethos. Instead, it simply established its Churches. From the outside, **others saw them as ethnic and unfriendly**. They did not provide the same market-friendly face as their American competition. Indeed, they were so non-competitive that they often told inquirers to go away. This same ethnic, geographical model was common in the Catholic immigrations as well.

But Churches have learned. America is a powerful cultural engine. Even the Orthodox are slowly learning how to welcome the stranger. Catholic Churches have sometimes learned to specialize, or to offer a wide-diversity of services to accommodate the range of tastes in the parish. And we have our gifts and talents.

“Everyone has a ministry,” I was taught. People in many congregations strained to discern what their unique ministry was. Suddenly everyone in every congregation had a vocation. “Equipping the saints for ministry” (from Ephesians 4) became a slogan for an American vision of the business of the parish Church. But what is the business of the Church?

Never has any writing of an Apostle been more abused and misused than the contemporary treatment of St. Paul’s writings on the Church. A letter to a deeply troubled Corinthian community, a plea for a vision of unity in a community that was fragmenting, has become the blueprint for parish management, an excuse for the importation of American managerial science (and gifts and talents surveys are nothing more).

To the Corinthians, after his excursus on the gifts of the Spirit, St. Paul suggests a “more excellent way.” And he then offers his chapter on love – among the most sublime passages in all of literature.

And, asking his forgiveness, I offer here a “more excellent” reflection on the nature of gifts and talents. Instead of gifts and talents, I suggest we think about wounds and handicaps. Or we could call them deficits and sins. For the excellent life of the Body of Christ is not constructed on

the foundation of our gifts and talents. It is quite the opposite. In St. Paul's description of his apostleship he says:

And [Christ] said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2Co 12:9-10)

We are not saved by our gifts and talents.

... God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. (1Co 1:27-29)

The wonderful good news in this upside-down world of salvation is that everybody can be weak and foolish. Gifts and talents are for the gifted and the talented (and in the American imagination, we are *all* gifted and talented – all the children are above average).

The rejection of this life of weakness and foolishness is the story of the modern Church. The proclamation of American mediocrity ("everybody is wonderful, everybody is special, especially you!") is the bread and butter of the Joel Osteens of the world. It is, sadly, at the heart of the quasi-magical world of pentecostal "everybody's got a gift." A prayer, a laying on of hands, and very shortly you are gifted, wonderful and have a ministry. It is little wonder that youth are leaving these movements in large numbers. The culture has already fed them a lifetime's worth of their gifts and talents – and they are empty. More of the same only tortures their surfeit of mediocrity. "If I am so special, why do I feel so bad?"

We are not saved by our gifts and talents. We are saved through our weakness, our brokenness, through our shame and our sin. The gospel is not that Christ united Himself with our wonderfulness:

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2Co 5:21)

Our union with Christ is precisely in our brokenness and shame – **and we fear to go there.** We pity those who are broken and work hard (and even pretend) not to be among their number. The gospel of gifts and talents unwittingly underwrites the social/economic agenda of the culture in which it dwells. The mythology of success (and the stigma of failure) drives consumerism and *laissez faire* vocationalism. And the brokenness of our lives is experienced as life among the losers. In truth, everyone always stands on the edge of the loser's abyss.

The gospel of the weak and the sinner, however, is consistently the gospel presented in the New Testament. We enter the Church through Holy Baptism, in which we engage in repentance. True repentance is the acknowledgement of weakness and sin, not the promise to do better. **Repentance** does not mark the beginning of our success, **but the embracing of our failure.**

I am not counseling people to go out and fail, nor by any means am I counseling an immoral life (Romans 6:1-2). But we will fail and our best moral efforts *will* fall short. What I am saying is that Christ meets us *precisely* at the point of failure and the point of falling short. It is only in our weakness that Christ's strength is made perfect in our lives.

The true and proper ethos of the Church is thus not one that celebrates success or promotes our gifts and talents. Rather, it is the place where the gospel **is so clearly present that the weak and the broken know themselves to be safe.**

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light. (Mat 11:28-30)

The rest of the world can bask in its excellence.

TRAVELING ICON OF OUR LADY OF POCHAIV

Why is it called the Traveling Icon? What if I'm single and/or live alone?

Each week immediately following the Divine Liturgy, the Traveling Icon of Our Lady of Pochaiv will be 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.

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. Our Bishops have encouraged that more time be spent in prayer. The Icon will help bring the family together at least once each day in prayer, allowing the Holy Spirit to be present daily amongst us. This will encourage and enrich the daily prayer life of each parishioner and their family.



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.

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!



Sunday offering for January 1

Amount	Number
\$15.00	1
\$16.00	1
\$35.00	1 (loose)
\$40.00	2
\$50.00	2
\$80.00	1
\$400.00	2
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\$1181.00	

Parishioner Total: \$1076.00

Visitor Total: 50.00

Average / parish household (42): \$27.59

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$1288.00

Shortfall: (\$212.00)

Sunday offering for January 8

Amount	Number
\$20.00	2
\$30.00	1
\$40.00	1
\$41.00	1 (loose)
\$85.00	1
\$100.00	2
\$120.00	1
\$160.00	1
\$400.00	1
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\$1116.00	

Parishioner Total: \$1116.00

Average / parish household (42): \$28.62

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$1288.00

Shortfall: (\$172.00)

Sunday offering for January 15

Amount	Number
\$15.00	2
\$20.00	4
\$25.00	1
\$40.00	1
\$50.00	4
\$57.00	1 (loose)
\$80.00	1
\$85.00	1
\$100.00	2
\$400.00	2
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\$1597.00	

Parishioner Total: \$1597.00

Average / parish household (42): \$40.95

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$1288.00

Surplus: \$309.00

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



**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

St. Paul to St. Timothy

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God for the promise of life in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, my dear child: grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

I am grateful to God, whom I worship with a clear conscience as my ancestors did, as I remember you constantly in my prayers, night and day. I yearn to see you again, recalling your tears, so that I may be filled with joy, as I recall your sincere faith that first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and that I am confident lives also in you.

For this reason, I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control. So do not be ashamed of your testimony to our Lord, nor of me, a prisoner for his sake; but bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the

strength that comes from God. He saved us and called us to a holy life, not according to our works but according to his own design and the grace bestowed on us in Christ Jesus before time began, but now made manifest through the appearance of our savior Christ Jesus, who destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed preacher and apostle and teacher. On this account I am suffering these things; but I am not ashamed, for I know him in whom I have believed and am confident that he is able to guard what has been entrusted to me until that day. Take as your norm the sound words that you heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard this rich trust with the help of the holy Spirit that dwells within us.”

2 Timothy 1:1-14

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