

SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE



Icon of the Publican and Pharisee



February 5, 2017

THE SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE

THE HOLY MARTYR AGATHA OF PALERMO IN SICILY; POSTFEAST OF THE ENCOUNTER

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 6 – FEBRUARY 12

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11 – *THE HOLY HIEROMARTYR BLAISE, BISHOP OF SEBASTE*

6:00 PM – GREAT VESPERS

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12 – *SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON; OUR HOLY FATHER MELETIUS, ARCHBISHOP OF ANTIOCH*

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners

Fast-free Week

During this week of the Publican and Pharisee, February 5- February 12, we do not fast, even on Wednesday and Friday

Thank You! to all who helped to take down the Christmas decorations this past Thursday as we transition from the Christmas season to the pre-Lenten season.

BORSHCH COOK-OFF FUNDRAISER

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 19 AT 12:00 NOON

Join in the fun of a Borshch Cook-off to raise money for the Ukrainian Orthodox church which was damaged by flooding during the recent rains. Cost is \$25.00 before February 15, \$35.00 after. Children 12 and under: Free.

RSVP: social@stjohnthebaptizer.org or by speaking to Olena Bankston. Please do not rely on Facebook to RSVP.

February Birthdays:

Maria Lavasanipour	–	2/6
Susan Avant	–	2/6
Katharine Shmorhay	–	2/15
Bulent Yodas	–	2/19
Kimberly Hartman	–	2/29

Многая і благая літа!
Many blessed years!

Forgiveness Sunday

In three weeks, on Sunday, February 26th there will be a “Cheesy Potluck” following the Divine Liturgy. This is the last opportunity to enjoy dairy products before the Great Fast begins. Please bring a meatless dish to share with others. (Please note: there are people in our community with severe and life threatening allergies so please no nuts or mushrooms.) Immediately following the potluck we will celebrate Forgiveness Vespers in the church to open the Great Fast. This is a beautiful opportunity to begin the fast with mutual forgiveness.

FROM MERE CHRISTIANITY

by C. S. Lewis

A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic - on the level with a man who says he is a poached egg - or he would be the devil of hell. You must take your choice. Either this was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.

Неділя про митаря і фарисея

Боже, змилуйся надо мною, грішним!

Лука 18, 10 – 14

Сьогодні десята неділя перед Великоднем. У цей день Ісус пригадає нам, де починається наш шлях до Великодня, де є початок, з якого зможемо слідувати за Ним, аби стати учасниками величної пасхальної події, аби поєднатися з Ним і бути звільненими. Тому це притча про правду, яка визволяє нас (Йо. 8, 32). У ній ідеться про правдивість нашої молитви. Бо справді, як ми живемо, так і молимося. У хвилини молитви, як і в кожную хвилину нашого життя, ми маємо однаковий стан серця. Слова нашої молитви виражають те, якими ми є у своєму серці.

У цій притці є два моменти, що просвічують наше розуміння молитви. Перший стосується саме наших слів. Фарисей розповідає про себе; перед Богом і перед людьми він виставляє своє ідеалізоване «я». Він дбає про значимість своєї особи, і в цьому бачить своє життя.

Митар у кількох словах виражає все. «Боже», – промовляє він, тобто вже від початку він звернений до Бога і залишається таким надалі. Навіть коли він говорить про себе: «Надо мною, грішним» (Лк. 18, 13), то знову ж таки показує себе через погляд Бога. Митар правдивий. Він віддає себе, в прямому розумінні слова, приносить себе перед Богом таким, яким є. Він не показує себе в ідеальному світлі. Він – митар, а тому брехун і злодій в очах людей. Митар визнає це перед Богом, у світлі Божого погляду, не надягаючи маски. Він правдивий у своїй молитві. То ж коли Бог очистить і виправдає його, він зможе бути правдивим у своєму житті.

Його молитва пливе у тому ж напрямку, що й молитва Церкви, яка заносить нас перед Господом – «Киріє, елейсон!», тобто «Господи, помилуй!». Наше відкрите серце зустрічається з відкритим серцем Бога, з Його милосердям. Назустріч хвилі наших

скорбот пливе хвиля Його милосердя, щедро виливаючись у наше серце. Це Він виправдовує нас, визволяє нас, дає нам життя.

Другий момент, що дає розуміння того, як нам бути правдивими: фарисей виставляє напоказ те, що він робить, тоді як митар чекає дії Бога. Відмінність між «робити» і «діяти» – це не гра слів. Коли моє життя обмежується тим, що я роблю, коли я цікавлюся лише своїми справами, переймаюся ними, моє «я» виступає до переду, назовні. А проте, хто діє в усьому, що ми робимо? Митар же відкриває своє серце до глибини, він визнає, що сидить в ямі, визнає порожнечу того, що він зробив, бо діяв сам, відділений від Бога (стан, у якому перебуває грішник, насамперед полягає у такій гордині), і чекає, щоб у ньому діяв Бог. Чекає, благаючи Його, і чим більше в ньому смирення, тим більше любов Бога діє в ньому і з ним.

Так, Бог таємничим способом діє в нашій душі. Це Він, наш Отець, діє першим, бо першим любить нас і діє, вихлюпуючи свою любов у нас, як тільки ми віддаємо себе Йому у правді серця. Саме такої молитви нам найбільше бракує. Молитва – це дія, що приносить найбільше плодів, бо вона – найвільніша дія нашого серця – єднається з дією Святого Духа, аби дозволити Йому здійснити те, чого Отець бажає для нас.

Саме так молиться Ісус. Просімо Його, щоб навчив нас «понижуватися» так, як Він, бути правдивими, з радістю визнавати, ким ми є. Тоді Святий Дух сходить до нашого серця і звідти разом з Ісусом підносить нас до Отця у єдності з усіма тими, за кого ми молимося «Господи, помилуй нас», хто, як і ми, перебуває у скорботах.

– Жан Корбон

Це називається світанком, Львів, Свічадо 2007

POLITICS AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Fr. Stephen Freeman

The modern project holds that the world can be improved and made better. It also holds that human beings can be improved and made better. And finally, it holds that the means of that improvement and betterment are political. Modernity began only partly as a philosophical assertion. It found its voice first, and foremost, in the political experiments of the 18th century. During the 19th and 20th centuries, the rapid growth of science, technology and consumer capitalism were celebrated as the fruit of modern political efforts, with very few voices raised in protest. Today, the political assumptions of the modern project remain the most widely accepted beliefs of our time, even in the face of their increasing inability to achieve agreement and work towards a common effort. Modernity fits most of the requirements of a religion and is probably best understood in that manner. As religions go, it has been successful in gaining adherents. It has also failed to achieve its promises, offering, instead, an unending religious argument that is today called “politics.”

The world that confronted the birth of the modern project was largely governed by monarchies, with varying schemes of shared power. Religion held a major role in the forming and shaping of culture, even after the initial splintering of religious unity in the Reformation. Economies were highly protectionist with many of the aspects of the Medieval guild system that protected traditional groups and the means of production. The battle-cry of modernity was “Reason.” Traditions of every form were challenged as unreasonable and rooted in superstitions and false assumptions. There was an assurance that reason could be applied to every area of life and yield improved, happier results. The American revolution was perhaps the first major application of these principles (though the French Revolution would take them to their extreme).

Various democratic schemes (Democracies, Republics, etc.) were put forward with careful thought. All of them sought to balance the various interests of society and produce a model that would guarantee the greatest success. No one can deny where that model has succeeded. However, it has also created a narrative of “how things work” that is inadequate for reality. It is the boundaries of that inadequacy that most reveal themselves in the intractable problems of our culture.

Human interactions in the modern setting have been framed within the understanding of “rights.” The language of rights assumes that human beings exist as a set of self-interested agents with free-will. It also assumes that one person’s rights begin where those of another ends. The world of competition and balance has also given rise to the language of oppression and liberation. Though it is possible to enlarge or alter that world by expanding individual demands to variously defined groups (common interest, common identity), nevertheless, in every case the result is the same assumption that we exist as a set of self-interested free-wills. The politics of identity remains the politics of individualism, with nothing more than various make-shift versions of an individual. Collective nouns (men, women, minorities, etc.) serve as stand-in’s for individuals. Something is lost.

The greatest loss, and the most insurmountable obstacle in the politics of modernity is established by the reality that **we do not, in fact, exist as individuals. Human life is not just community (a collection of individuals), it is a communion.** No one life exists alone. The needs of the one do not exist apart from the needs of the other. Our lives co-inhere.

At its root, the failure of modernity is its account of what it means to be human. It

pointedly and persistently ignores the given wisdom of inherited human experience and continues to insist that its model is not only right, but that any amount of technological and artificial interference can be justified in making its solutions work. The result is an increasing alienation of individuals as well as the creation of an abstracted, artificial biology that begins to rival the imagination of Mary Shelley.

Against this backdrop of ideological artifice stands the sanity of a growing awareness of nature itself. We see, rather clearly, that unbridled technology and exploitation of the environment yields disastrous results. Questions about non-intervention of genetically modified seed-lines are not only reasonable, they press an important point. Are we engineering our way into a world of unhealthy, even poisonous foods? We conquer disease only to invent un-treatable bacteria. We rightly wonder at our alienation from nature and the natural demands of the human body.

But these very questions are being asked by people who themselves embrace a relatively unimpeded use of technological interventions within human beings (including the genome). The contradiction seems to be ignored. If the contradiction were noticed then the question of what is natural for human beings, perhaps even, what is the traditioned, given, human existence would have to be examined for once.

Such questions, however, are obscured by the noise of the continued fray of political voices that compete for attention in the battle of will versus will. It is the sound of our times. It is the continuing echo of the modern project that will only persist in trying to solve that which needs no solving other than true discovery and admission.

Life as communion is our natural existence. There are imbalances and frustrations, errors to be corrected and injustices to be corrected. But, in the end, the common human life, the life lived as a common life, is the only life that is life-giving. That truth and the path of that truth are found through the patient endurance of our common existence and the willingness to live within the bounds of our true existence.

No traditional society is perfect. Our abuse of one another is quite ancient. But the instinct of the modern project that we should throw off the bonds of tradition and re-imagine the world only makes us prisoners to other very ancient foes. There are very few things that admit of a political solution. The march of liberation and continuing declaration of rights sets the stage for every succeeding debate and power struggle. None of them sets the stage for greater communion, nor the change of the human heart that is only found in communion.

Because communion is not a political project, it is not a competitor within the political world. It is not an argument for solving problems (it is the solution); it is not the dream of a better world (it is the willingness to live in the present one). It is family, children, sickness, weakness, kindness, sharing, prayer. It is transformative but not as political solution. The Christian Church is precisely such a life in communion.

The modern project has changed the nature of the human conversation. Because it locates the solution for all things (its “better world”) within the political realm, it judges all things within that setting. Only those things that can argue for a better political solution are given attention, everything else is deemed to be impractical or somehow belonging to something other than the “real world.” When Christians choose to agree with the assumptions of the modern project, they agree as well that the Church serves only an ancillary position, perhaps as adviser or moral coach. Too often, however, simply agreeing to be part of the modern conversation is already an abandonment of faith.

Christ has not made the Kingdom of God hostage to the politics of any culture. The life that He has given us is already present and immediately available. **It requires that it be lived. Just lived.**

If Jesus Came to Your House

If Jesus came to your house to spend a day or two —
If He came unexpectedly, I wonder what you'd do.
Oh, I know you'd give your nicest room to such an honored Guest,
And all the food you'd serve to Him would be the very best,
And you would keep assuring Him you're glad to have Him there —
That serving Him in your home is joy beyond compare.

But — when you saw Him coming, would you meet Him at the door
With arms outstretched in welcome to your Heav'nly Visitor?
Or would you have to change your clothes before you let Him in,
Or hide some magazines and put the Bible where they'd been?
Would you turn off the radio and hope He hadn't heard
And wish you hadn't uttered that last, loud, hasty word?

Would you hide your worldly music and put some hymn books out?
Could you let Jesus walk right in, or would you rush about?
And I wonder — if the Savior spent a day or two with you,
Would you go right on doing the things you always do?
Would you keep right on saying the things you always say?
Would life for you continue as it does from day to day?

Would your family conversation keep up its usual pace,
And would you find it hard each meal to say a table grace?
Would you sing the songs you always sing and read the books you read
And let Him know the things on which your mind and spirit feed?
Would you take Jesus with you everywhere you'd planned to go,
Or would you maybe change your plans for just a day or so?

Would you be glad to have Him meet your very closest friends,
Or would you hope they'd stay away until His visit ends?
Would you be glad to have Him stay forever on and on,
Or would you sigh with great relief when He at last was gone?
It might be interesting to know the things that you would do
If Jesus Christ in person came to spend some time with you.

WHAT IS A FIRST-PORITION 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

.....

Sunday offering for January 29

Amount	Number
\$15.00	2
\$20.00	3
\$30.00	1
\$40.00	4
\$41.00	1 (loose)
\$50.00	1
\$85.00	1
\$100.00	1
<u>\$400.00</u>	<u>1</u>
\$956.00	

Parishioner Total: \$956.00

Average / parish household (43): \$12.32
Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$1288.00

Shortfall: <\$352.00>

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**

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

Humbling Ourselves

A man begins to go astray when he withdraws from humility. He who has abandoned God does the evil spirit oppress, as he did Saul.

The enemy's snares are smeared with honey. He who is attracted by the sweetness of honey becomes caught in the snares and filled with all manner of woe. Love humility and you will never fall into the devil's snare, for, soaring on humility's swift wings you will always remain above the enemy's snares.

Arrogance is like a very tall but rotten tree. All of its branches are brittle, and if someone climbs upon it, he immediately falls from the height he has attained.

Blessed is he who is enriched with good hope and illuminated with good thoughts: his glory is great and everlasting.

Let us strive for sober attention, that we

might recognize our sins and be constantly humbled, that we might not nurture, like the serpent, a high opinion of ourselves or wickedness. Let us love sobriety, that we might have a pure heart and that we might preserve the temple entrusted to us undefiled by sinful corruption.

Wondrous is prayer accompanied by sighs and tears, especially if the tears are shed in secret. He who prays in his mind with faith beholds the Lord before himself. For in Him do we live, move, and exist. If your heart has been hardened, weep before the Lord; that He might shine upon you the illumination of knowledge and grant that with an ardent heart you might be carried up to Him.

St. Ephrem the Syrian

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