# THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST THIRD SUNDAY OF MATTHEW



Icon of Saints Peter and Paul -- June 29th



## June 25, 2017 Third Sunday after Pentecost

#### TONE 2

Leave-taking of the Nativity of the Forerunner The Holy Venerable Martyr Febronia of Nisibis

#### Schedule of Services for June 26 – July 2

Thursday, June 29 – The Holy Martyr Agrippina of Rome (Holy Day of Obligation) 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy (served by Fr. Frank) For all parishioners Saturday, July 1

Please Note: There will be NO Vespers during the Summer months unless noted in the bulletin

SUNDAY, JULY 2 – FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; ALL SAINT OF RUS'-UKRAINE; DEPOSITION OF THE

Precious Robe of the Most Holy Theotokos in the Church of Blachernae;

VERKHRATS'KA WEEPING ICON OF THE MOTHER OF GOD (1688)

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners

#### FR. JAMES WILL BE AWAY...

Fr. James will be out of town through 7/1/17 for the Installation of Bishop Benedict. In case of an emergency please contact Fr. Frank Avant at (760) 805-1667, Fr. Brian Escobedo of Holy Angels Byzantine Catholic Church at (858) 277-2511, or Fr. James Babcock at (714) 600-3660.



#### Роздуми від Владики Венедикта

Ми деколи не усвідомлюємо, що завжди стоїмо перед вибором: вибрати добро - піти доброю дорогою, чи вибрати зло – піти злою дорогою. У нас завжди є вибір. Коли каємося на сповіді у своїх гріхах, то розуміємо, що могли б вчинити інакше, однак в якусь мить вирішили вчинити саме так. Саме покаяння це ствердження того, що я зробив недобрий вибір, недобрий вчинок, недобрий крок. Кожен на власному досвіді вже переконався, що маємо пильнувати, який вибір робимо. Пильнувати, що думаємо, які думки приймаємо, контролювати свої емоції, чувати над тим, що допускаємо до свого серця. Чування, духовне розрізнення – завжди було дуже важливим у традиції Церкви. Знаємо приклад того, що може статися, коли не чувати. Сатана ввійшов у серце Юди, бо той допустив це через думки, які приходили до нього. А вже потім це відобразилося у вчинках Юди. Знаємо також, який кінець мало те, що почалося з думки. На сповіді ми каємося з наших гріхів, але не усвідомлюємо, що ці гріхи сталися внаслідок тих бажань і думок, які ми допустили у своє серце й погодилися з ними, а лише потім, коли трапилася нагода, це виявилось у наших вчинках, у тих чи інших гріхах. Тож чуваймо, щоб зло не входило в наше серце! Пильнуймо, щоб не дозволити нічому злому прийти й оселитися!

## A Reflection from Bishop BENEDICT

We sometimes do not realize that we are always facing a decision to make a choice: to choose the road of good or to choose evil. We always have a choice. When we go to confession to repent for our sins, we realize that we could have made a better choice, but in that moment we decided to do what we did. Repentance itself is a statement that says we have made a bad choice, committed a bad deed or taken a bad step. Through our own experiences we have become convinced that we have to watch what choice we make. To guard what we think, what thoughts we think, to control our emotions, to protect what we allow into our hearts. Reflection, spiritual distinction - has always been very important in the tradition of the Church. We know the example of what can happen when we do not like it. Satan entered the heart of Judas. He had admitted it because of the thoughts that he allowed to enter his mind and which were reflected in his actions. We also know what the result was that began with a thought. In confession, we repent for our sins, but we do not realize that these sins were due to the desires and thoughts that we allowed into our hearts and agreed with, but only then, when the opportunity availed itself, they were manifested in our deeds, in those other sins. So let's make sure that evil does not enter into our hearts! Let's take care not to let anything evil go and settle in us!

#### Довіряти Отцеві

Матей 6, 22 – 33 Любов Отия

Ми ніколи не можемо достатньо пережити у своєму житті те, про що говорить у сьогоднішньому Євангелії Ісус. Послухаймо Його слова, бо в них Він відкриває нам, чим є наше щоденне життя, кожен його день: наше життя — це зв'язок із Богом, такий простий і такий прекрасний.

Найперше Ісус відкриває нам, ким є ми: ми прекрасніщі за Соломона і за польові лілеї, ми є образом Його слави! Та чомусь нас не раз гризе тривога. Якими не були б її причини і походження, кого з нас вона раптом не охоплює час до часу? І ми не просто тривожимося, — зрештою, відчувати тривогу — це нормально, — але ми триваємо в ній. Ми схильні перейматися. А це вже гірше!

Що це означає? Що Ісус відкриває нам про нас самих? Найперше те, що коли ми переймаємося, то все ще перебуваємо в смерті, в небутті, ми втягнені в той нігілізм, який простирається цілим світом. Чому? Бо поводимося так, неначе походимо самі від себе: я намагаюся робити те, чого хочу, та позаяк зустрічаю на своєму шляху повно перешкод, поринаю в тривогу.

Иноді ми виринаємо з того стану смерти: це саме те, що Ісус називає «маловірством» (див. Лк. 12, 28), ми — «міні-віруючі». Поводимося так, неначе ми — творці самих себе, а потім, коли щось не вдається, кличемо Бога на допомогу: з нашого серця починає виринати трішки віри. Це не найкраще характеризує нас: ми не знаємо самих себе, а звідси — не знаємо нашого Отця. Лише Ісус, улюблений Син, Який узяв на себе нашу смерть і воскрес у своїй, тобто в нашій людській природі, таким чином виявляє нам Отця.

Наш Отець! Як казали пророки, ми прийшли на світ із Його скелі (див. Іс. 51, 1). Від Нього ми народжуємося щомиті. Наше вічне і неповторне єство, до якого, звичайно, спричинилися наші батьки і наші предки, наша вільна, неповторна, вічна істота народжується від Отця кожної миті. Він дає себе нам, і ми існуємо завдяки тому, що Він безкорисливо нам себе дарує.

Наша біда, від якої походять наші тривоги, в тому, що часто забуваємо Його і діємо так, наче постали самі зі себе. Але нам так просто, так легко повернути своє обличчя до Нього, адже ми постали від Нього і надалі безперервно постаємо. Достатньо бути біля джерела нашої істоти, там, де Він є з нами, на глибині нашого серця.

Насправді ми боїмося переміни свого серця. Бо це вимагатиме від нас входити до нього

частіше, не боятися тиші серця, в якій до нас промовляє Отець, кличе нас через своє Слово – Ісуса. Воскреслий Христос є доказом того, що Отець любить нас, адже Він став одним із нас і ніколи не перестає бути з нами. Кожен з нас переживає у своєму людському житті свої тривоги, страждання, надії, мрії та багато всього. Але все це воскреслий Ісус бере на себе, переживає з нами.

Наша віра починається саме з того: ми віримо у воскреслого Христа, а не в якогось невизначеного «бога», що перебуває завжди назовні нас. Наш Отець, живий Бог, дає себе нам в дар. І власне через те, що Він дає себе нам, дарує себе безкорисливо, і через те, що ми є Його образом, наші стосунки вільні, не нав'язані. Бог не є засобом, який можна спробувати, коли все решта не принесло результатів. Мусимо відповідати, як Він, свобідно, і цією свободою є хтось, хто живе в нас — Святий Дух.

Цей фрагмент Євангелія — один із найглибших за своєю простотою, і перші, хто слухав ці слова, мабуть, як і ми, не відразу зрозуміли їхній глибинний зміст: наш Бог є спільністю, тому Він є джерелом і сенсом тієї неповторної сутности нашої особи, основою якої є стосунки з иншими.

То ж просімо Святого Духа, щоб Він розбудив нас, щоб вивів нас із того «смертельного забуття», як ми кажемо в молитві, просячи прощення, з того «смертельного забуття», яким є наш гріх, наш відхід від Бога. Нехай Святий Дух, Дух спільности, зверне наш погляд до Отця і Його дітей в улюбленому Сині. Мусимо «знову стати Його дітьми» (див. Йо. 1, 12; 1 Йо. 3, 1). Це і є — «шукати Царства Божого» (див. Мт. 6, 33; Лк. 12, 31).

Потребуємо знову стати дітьми у довірі, тій довірі, якою лише Святий Дух може наповнити наші серця, якщо взиватимемо його. У нас, без сумніву, є причини стогнати, але стогони Святого Духа в нас — це зовсім инше! Це ті стогони, які Ісус узяв на себе, через які Він дає нам своє життя воскреслого. Просімо Його наполегливо — у цьому полягає віра — «обернути» нас до Отця, як звернений до Нього Ісус, Який віддав себе, і з довірою приніс себе Йому в дар. Цю довіру ніщо не може похитнути. Надія не засоромить, адже нам щедро даровано Святого Духа, Який є скарбом дібр.

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

#### 8 Modern Errors Every Catholic Should Know and Avoid

by Msgr. Charles Pope, ncregister.com

#### Consider this eightfold list of modern errors that are common even in the Church.

There are many errors in our time that masquerade as wisdom and balance, but they are no such thing. I have written before on many errors of our time of a more philosophical nature. The following list that I compile is more phenomenological than philosophical.

To say that something is phenomenological is to indicate that it is more descriptive of the thing as experienced, than of the exact philosophical or scientific manner of categorizing it. For example, to say the sun rises and sets is to describe the phenomenon, or what we see and experience. The sun does not actually rise and set. Rather, the earth turns in relation to the sun which remains fixed. But we use the phenomenon (what we experience) to communicate the reality, rather than the more scientific words like *apogee*, *perigee*, *nadir* and *periapsis*.

And thus in the list that follows I propose certain fundamental errors of our time that are common, but I use language that speaks less to philosophies and logical fallacies, and more to the errors as experienced.

Further, though the errors are common in the world, I present them here as especially problematic because we all too often find them in the Church as well. They are sadly and commonly expressed by Catholics and represent a kind of infection that has set in which reflects worldly and secular thinking, not Godly and spiritual thinking.

These are only eight. I am just getting started. I hope you will add to the list and define carefully what you identify. But for now, consider this eightfold list of modern errors that are common even in the Church.

1. Mercy without reference to repentance – For too many today, "mercy" has come to mean, "God is fine with what I am doing." But true mercy does not overlook sin, it presupposes it, sees it as a serious problem, and offers a way out of sin. God's mercy is his way of extending a hand to draw us out of the mire of sin.

And this is why repentance is the key that unlocks mercy. For, it is by repentance that we reach for and

grasp God's merciful and outstretched hand.

One of the chief errors today is the proclamation of mercy without reference to repentance. Sadly, this is common, even in the Church. It is far too common to hear sermons on mercy with no reference to repentance.

The opening words of Jesus' ministry were "Repent and believe the Gospel!" The order is important. For how can we experience the good news of God's mercy if we do not first repent, come to a new mind and know our need for that mercy. If you don't know the bad news, the good news is no news. Repentance brings us to our senses, makes us accept our need for change, seeks God and unlocks his mercy.

This error of mercy without reference to repentance is widespread in the Church today and leads to the sin of presumption, a sin against hope.

**2.** Staurophobia – The term staurophobia comes from Greek roots and refers to a fear of the Cross (stauros = cross + phobia = fear). Within the Church this error emerges from reticence by Catholics to frankly discuss the demands of discipleship. It reveals a strong hesitation to insist that even hard things are often the best the proper thing to do.

Many Catholics, including priests and bishops, are downright fearful when pointing to the demands of the cross. When the world protests and says, "Are you saying that those with same-sex attraction cannot get married or be sexually intimate but must live a kind of celibacy?!" The honest answer is, "Yes, that is what we are saying." But since that answer is hard and rooted in the Cross, many Catholics are dreadfully afraid of a straight-forward, honest answer. The same is true for other difficult moral situations such as Euthanasia (in spite of suffering, we are still not free to take our life or that of another), abortion (despite difficulties and even in cases of rape and incest we are still not free to kill a child in the womb), and divorce and remarriage (in spite of unfortunate developments in a marriage, this does not mean that one is free to leave one marriage to enter another).

Staurophobia also makes many hesitant to issue correction within the Church and in families. There is almost a cringing fear of insisting on any demands or requirements or of even issuing the mildest of punishments or corrective measures. Things like this might upset people and that is one of the worst outcomes for a staurophobic who fears any sort of suffering, for themselves or others. They fail to see a redemptive quality in insisting on the demands of the cross.

St. Paul says, But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. (Gal 6:14). But for too many Catholics today, the cross and its demands makes them cringe and even feel embarrassment. Instead of boasting in the power of the Cross, the thinking seems more to be "How dare we, or the Church point to it, and actually insist that it is better than the comfort of false compassion."

St. Paul understood that *Christ crucified is a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles*. But he goes on to say, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God (see 1 Cor 1:23-24). But try to tell this to a staurophobic, and sadly they are legion in the Church.

**3. Universalism** – Universalism is the belief that most, if not all people are going to be saved in the end. This is directly contrary to our Lord's own words wherein he sadly attests that "many" are on the road that leads to destruction and "few" are on the narrow and difficult road that leads to salvation (See Matthew 7:14, Luke 13:23-30). Dozens of parables and other warnings also come from our Lord in this regard and the straight-forward teaching of the Lord makes it clear that we must soberly accept that many, and not a few are going to be lost unless we, by God's grace urgently summon them to Christ and to authentic discipleship.

I have written extensively on this elsewhere and do not intend to rewrite all that now. But universalism is a serious discrepancy that is widely held today.

Countless Catholics seldom if ever hear sermons that warn of judgment or the possibility of hell. Neither do they mention it to others or even consider it as an actual possibility.

Given the pervasiveness of universalism there is very little urgency among Catholics to evangelize or even live the faith themselves. This attitude has

to go if there is going to be any serious reform in the Church or evangelical zeal.

**4. Deformed Dialogue** – The term "dialogue" has come to mean an almost endless conversation. As such it lacks a clear goal to convince the other. It usually just means "talk." In our culture merely talking is given a lot of credit.

While talking is not bad *per se*, it can substitute mere action for a true goal. Originally "dialogue" had a more vigorous meaning. It comes from the Greek and is used in Scripture.  $\delta\iota a\lambda \dot{\epsilon}\gamma o\mu a\iota$  (dialégomai) where we get the word "dialogue" comes from the Greek roots diá, (through, from one side across to the other) +  $l\acute{e}g\bar{o}$ , ("speaking to a conclusion"). Dia intensifies lego so it is properly, "getting a conclusion across" by exchanging thoughts, words or reasons.

And thus we see "dialogue" was originally a far more vigorous word than it would seem most people mean by the word today. In the New Testament is it used more often in the context of giving testimony and of trying to convince others the Gospel (e.g. Acts 17:2, 17 and 18:4).

But, as noted, in our times dialogue can actually stall conversion and given the impression that all sides have valid stances and that merely "understanding" the position of the other is praiseworthy. Understanding may have value, but mostly is of value to lay a foundation for conversion to the truth of the Gospel.

It is unclear today that conversion is actually a goal when many Catholics speak of dialogue with the world or with unbelievers. Dialogue is a tool, not a goal, it is a method, not a destination. And as a method, dialogue (in its original meaning) is a vigorous, dynamic and joyful setting forth of the Gospel, not a chatty and (seemingly) endless conversation.

It is true, we seek to win souls, not arguments. But winning the soul is a true goal that many modern references to "dialogue" and "understanding" seem to lack. Hence "deformed dialogue" makes our compendium of modern problems and errors.

**5. Equating Love with Kindness** – Kindness is an aspect of love. But so is rebuke; so is punishment; as is praise. Yet today many, even in the Church, think of love only as kindness, affirmation, approval, encouragement, and other positive attributes. But true love is, at times, willing to punish, to insist on change, and to rebuke error.

Yet the modern age, equating love with mere kindness says, "If you really love me you will affirm, even celebrate, what I do." In this sort of climate, when Church teaching does not conform with modern notions of sexuality, for example, the Church is accused of "hate" simply because we do not "affirm" what people demand we affirm. Identity politics (where people hinge their whole identity and dignity on a narrow range of behaviors or attributes) intensifies the perception of a personal affront.

But instead of standing our ground and insisting that setting love and truth in opposition is a false dichotomy, most Catholics cave and many also come to believe that love can be reduced to mere kindness. Many of them take up the view of the world that the Church is unkind and therefore mean or even hateful. Never mind that Jesus said things that were, by this standard, unkind, and that he often spoke quite frankly about sin (beyond mere social justice and pharisaical attitudes to include things such as sexual sin, adultery, divorce, unbelief and so forth). No, forget all that, because God is love, and love is kindness and kindness is always pleasant and affirming. Therefore they conclude that Jesus couldn't really have said many of the things attributed to him. This error reduces Jesus to a harmless hippie and misconstrues love by equating it with mere kindness and unconditional affirmation.

Many Catholics have succumbed to this error and sacrificed the truth. It has a high place in our compendium of modern errors.

**6. Misconstruing the nature of tolerance** – Most people today equate tolerance with approval. Therefore, when many demand or ask for "tolerance" what they really demand is approval.

But tolerance is from the Latin tolerare: to put up with, countenance, or suffer. As such it refers to the conditional endurance of, or at least non-interference with beliefs, actions, or practices that one considers to be wrong. One might tolerate them to some degree to prevent, for example, severe enforcements or draconian penalties, unnecessary intrusion into privacy, etc. But if the *objection component* is missing, we are not speaking of "toleration" but of "indifference" or "affirmation."

And here, precisely, lies the heart of the error for Catholics who embrace the toleration- as-approval error. Simply put, what they are calling tolerance and even congratulating themselves for, is actually a form indifferentism and subjectivism. It does not properly reverence God's moral vision. Instead of joyfully and

zealously announcing the truth as revealed by God, many adopt a false tolerance that is indifferent to truth or even affirms error. And then, to top it off they congratulate themselves for the "moral superiority" of their tolerance. In fact, it is more likely sloth that is at work. Sloth in this case is an aversion to undertake the arduous task of speaking the truth to a doubting scoffing world.

Tolerance is an important virtue in complex and pluralistic cultures, but it ought not be so expanded that it loses its actual meaning or be so absolutized that tolerance is expected at all times, simply because it is demanded.

Catholics also need to sober up a bit and realize that when many today demand tolerance from us, they have no intention of extending it to us. Many of the same interest groups that demand tolerance are working to erode religious liberty and are increasingly unwilling to tolerate religious views in the public square. Our consistent caving to demands for false tolerance have only help to usher in a great darkness and pressure to conform to or approve of serious sin

7. Anthropocentrism – This term refers to the modern tendency to have man at the center and not God. It has been a long tendency in the world ever since the Renaissance. Sadly, though it has deeply infected the Church in recent decades.

This is especially evident in the Liturgy, not intrinsically, but as practically and widely celebrated. Our architecture, songs and gestures, incessant announcements, and congratulatory rituals are self-referential and inwardly focused. The liturgy, as commonly celebrated seems more about us than God. Even the Eucharistic prayer which is directed entirely to God is usually celebrated facing the people.

It is never good, especially in the Church, to consign God to the margins. This marginalization of God is evident not only in the liturgy, but in parish life which is often top-heavy with activism rooted in the corporal works of mercy, but little attention to the spiritual works of mercy. Social organizations predominate, but it hard to find interest in Bible Study, traditional novenas and other spiritual works devoted to God.

Announcing God through vigorous evangelization work is also rare and the parish seems more a clubhouse than a lighthouse.

Human beings are important, Christian humanism is a virtue, but anthropocentrism is a common modern error rooted in excess. The worship of God and the spread of his kingdom is too little in evidence

in many parishes. Parents too seem more focused on the temporal wellbeing of children, on their academic standing and so forth, but less concerned overall with the spiritual knowledge or wellbeing of them.

### God must be central if man is to be truly elevated.

**8. Role reversal** – Jesus said that the Holy Spirit whom he would send to us would convict the world (see John 16:8). And thus, the proper relationship of a Catholic to the world is to have the world on trial. St. Paul says, *Test all things. Hold fast to what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.* (1 Thess 5:21-22). So, again, the world is to be on trial based on the light of the Gospel.

But too often Catholics have things reversed and put the Word of God and the teachings of the Church on trial, judging them by the perspective of the world. We should judge all things by the light of God. And yet it is common to hear Catholics scoff at teachings that challenge worldly thinking or offend against worldly priorities. Many Catholics have tucked their faith under their political views, worldviews, preferences and thoughts. If the faith conflicts with any of these worldly categories, guess which usually gives way.

Jesus says, If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels. (Mk 8:38). But many are ashamed of the Lord's teachings that do not conform to worldly and popular notions.

All of this amounts to a tragic role reversal wherein the world and its notions overrule the gospel. It should be the world that is convicted by the Holy Spirit. Instead we put very God himself in the role of defendant. It should not be so. Do not be deceived: God will not be mocked. Whatever a man sows, he will reap in return. The one who sows to please his flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; but the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. (Gal 6:7-8)

So here are just eight entries onto our compendium of modern errors. More need to be added and you can help.

In John, chapter 8, when speaking to the Pharisees, Jesus is not kind but he is loving, warning them "If you do not come to believe that "I AM" you will die in your sins."

#### Sunday offering for June 18

Number
1
1
3 (1 loose)
2
1
1
2
1
1
1
1
1

Parishioner Total: \$720.00

Average / parish household (43): \$9.23 Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2200.00

Shortfall: <\$1480.00>

#### 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

#### The Illustrious and Pre-Eminent Apostles Peter and Paul

The New Testament clearly shows Peter as the leader of the Apostles, chosen by Jesus to have a special relationship with him. With James and John he was privileged to witness the Transfiguration, the raising of a dead child to life and the agony in Gethsemane. His mother-in-law was cured by Jesus. He was sent with John to prepare for the last Passover before Jesus' death. His name is first on every list of apostles. But the Gospels prove their own veracity by the unflattering details they include about Peter. He clearly had no public relations person. It is a great comfort for ordinary mortals to know that Peter also has his human weakness, even in the presence of Jesus. After Jesus' Ascension, Peter presided in Jerusalem, was bishop of Antioch, and finally presided over the Church in Rome where on the Vatican Hill he was martyred, head downwards according to tradition, in the Circus of Nero.

Paul had been the most Pharisaic of Pharisees, the most legalistic of Mosaic lawyers. Following his conversion, he suddenly appears to other Jews as a heretical welcomer of Gentiles, a traitor and apostate. Paul's central conviction was simple and absolute: Only God can save humanity. No human effort - even the most scrupulous observance of law - can create a human good which we can bring to God as reparation for sin and payment for grace. To be saved from itself, from sin, from the devil and from death, humanity must open itself completely to the saving power of Jesus. Paul never lost his love for his Jewish brothers and sisters, though he carried on a lifelong debate with them about the uselessness of the Law without Christ. He reminded the Gentiles that they were grafted on the parent stock of the Jews, who were still God's chosen people, the children of the promise. According to tradition, Paul was beheaded in Rome near the Ostian Way where the church of Tre Fontane now stands.

Visit www.ecpubs.com for more publications.