

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
EIGHTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW



Icon of Saints Silas, Silvanos and Others-- July 30th



July 30, 2017

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

TONE 7

THE HOLY APOSTLES SILAS AND SILVANUS,
AND THEIR COMPANIONS: CRESCENS, EPNETUS, AND ANDRONICUS

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR JULY 31 – AUGUST 6

SATURDAY, AUGUST 5 – PREFEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

6:00 PM – Great Vespers with Lytia (satisfies obligation)

SUNDAY, AUGUST 6 – THE HOLY TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy followed by blessing of fruit For All Parishioners

FRUIT OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

“Lord, it is good for us to be here” (Matthew 17:4)

The feast of Holy Transfiguration falls near the end of the liturgical year. Only the Dormition of the Theotokos follows, to complete and close the cycle. Why now? The time of the event comes six days following the confession of St. Peter [Matthew 17:1, Mark 9:2], or “about eight days” [Luke 9:28], although that doesn’t fix the date precisely. Nothing is arbitrary. It comes in the season of fruit harvest. The Orthodox Church greets the feast with the tradition of the blessing of fruit. Here is a natural expression of sacrifice to the Lord of His blessings of rain and sunshine which make it possible to reap a bountiful harvest. We who bring our fruit in plastic bags from the supermarket must use our imagination in order to be truly grateful for the harvest blessings. We have not the same appreciation as if we had brought our grapes and apples from our own vines and trees. It takes a farmer’s daily prayers to feel the reward of his petitions.

At another level, we all can comprehend spiritual fruit brought to fruition through the liturgical year now consummated at the completion. The year begins with the birth of the Holy Mother of God, the young virgin herself the glorious fruit of the promise to Abraham and his children to erase Adam’s rebellion and restore the glory of the people of Israel. Mary is the “beginning of our salvation” - the anticipation of a new covenant relationship and the anticipation of the Messiah, the Son of God who would be the fruit of her virgin womb.

The time is ripe to receive the divine light in Christ through the Holy Spirit for those in some ways capable of receiving it. Consider the filtration process: From the 5,000 who heard Him offer them the credentials of the blessed from the Sermon on the Mount; to the seventy selected to visit the villages of the Jews and announce His ministry among them [Luke 10:1]; further choosing twelve apostles;

and from them but three blessed to experience His Transfiguration atop the mountain, that eternal moment beyond normal time when Moses and Elijah would be brought from the past to appear with the Son of God in a blinding illumination of the Kingdom of God, displaying eternity in a fraction of time. It was a joy that the three disciples did not want to end.

Is it any wonder that so many of our monastic communities have chosen this feast for their own patronal namesake? The revelation of a second Epiphany where all three Persons of the Holy Trinity are involved? Here, the highlight of spiritual progress offers a *supernal* (heavenly) incentive for all serious Christians to realize and fulfill the precious words of St. Paul: “One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal...” [Philippians 3:13].

When the three offer to make three booths and remain in that sublime exalted state, Christ responds that they must descend from the mountain top and return to what was left behind. Such a rare treat was for them a mere aperitif of blessings, enough for them to experience once but never to be forgotten. [III Peter 1:16] He warned them also not to share the experience with anyone until after His resurrection. We can imagine them describing the indescribable to their fellow apostles and the women during those forty days following Christ’s appearance in the Upper Room that first day of His resurrection and until the Ascension. And what of us? We conclude each Divine Liturgy with the proclamation: “We have seen the true light!” Have we indeed! Has that been an experience, a *proleptic* (anticipatory) proclamation, or something we just do not understand?

ЛІТУРГІЙНЕ ЖИТТЯ НА ПАРОХІЇ

Літургійна молитва — джерело та ісповідування життя Церкви

Преосвященний владика Венедикт (Алексійчук)

Сучасне літургійне життя (продовження)

Паралітургійні богослужіння

У більшості міських і сільських парохій важливіше від богослужінь добового кола місце займають паралітургійні практики: молебні в травні і червні, молебні в перші п'ятниці, молебні щонеділі. Молитовне життя парохій не співпадає з літургійним ритмом. Люди шукають духовної і молитовної глибини, але не можуть її віднайти в богослужінні, бо недостатньо розуміють його. Відлякує людей також як складність богослужбового уставу в його цілості, так і спорадичні скорочення богослужінь, які не облегшують, але заплутують і без того складні літургійні структури нашого часослова. Є парохії, де моляться без священників молебні, акафісти, хресні дороги. Це не є щось нове, про проблему богослужбового уставу і паралітургійні практики дискутували літургисти як східних, так і західних церков на початку століття. Паралітургійні богослужіння, згідно зі Конституцією про Святу Літургію, є добрим досвідом, але вони повинні бути достосованими до цілості літургійної традиції церкви: "Дуже поручається побожні практики хрищеного люду, аби лише вони були згідні з законами і нормами Церкви, ... Але ті

богослуження, з огляду на літургійні часи, треба так влаштовувати, щоб вони були згідні з святою Літургією, щоб від неї вони якоюсь мірою походили й до неї народ вели, бо вона, вже із своєї природи, багато їх перевищає". (Конституція про Святу Літургію, 13).

У цьому контексті можна було б задля збереження воскресного характеру неділі, беручи до уваги пасторальну ситуацію сучасної парохії, думати над створенням воскресного молебня, центром якого було б читання воскресного євангелія, а головними елементами — катедральні елементи сучасної візантійської утрени.

Неможливість священниками забезпечити достойне літургійне життя парохії

Священники погоджуються, що здебільшого по сільських парохіях молитовне життя не є задовільним, але священники не в силах його провадити, бо часто мають 2-3 парохії. Проблеми є із перебуванням священникам на парохії та доїздом до парохії. Великою проблемою є якість служіння священника. Часто має місце поспіх і недбайливість при звершенні богослужінь. Часто ми цього не зауважуємо, але на це вже починають реагувати у своїх дописах наші вірні, які богослужіння сприймають як святкове

пережиття: “Чи можливий у свята поспіх? Чи можливий він у Церкві? Здавалося б, хоча б у свята наші пресвітери будуть велично і достойно служити, співатимуть із чуттям урочистості, не гнатимуть бідні ектенії втришия... Але ні. Може, десь і служать урочисто, однак – не в нас. У нас і в свята – «вечно нажатая педаль». Якийсь вічний дух нетерпіння, висолопленого язика ... Бо скажіть: як часто чуєте ви гарно виконану ектенію? Скільки разів на рік? Чи ще десь існує такий спосіб виконання ектеній, коли прошення, заспівувані дияконом або пресвітером, виконуються дійсно діалогічно з хором/народом, а не в страшному і вбивчому поспіху накладаються на «Господи, помилуй» чи «Подай, Господи»? ... Це – псевдопасторалізм. Так звана пасторальна доцільність, у жертву якій в нас приноситься всяка краса і всякий літургійний сенс. Аби тільки народ «мав Службу Божу», а яка якість того «мати» – кого це обходить...”

Такі репліки можуть вказувати на проблему нашого літургійного життя: цілковитий брак усвідомлення, перед ким ми стоїмо, до кого промовляємо наші ектенії і молитви; нема свідомості, Хто нам служить і Кому ми служимо.

Молитва як обов’язок

Ми часто сприймаємо молитву як обов’язок. Християнин, а це значить також член парохії — чи священник, чи рядовий вірний, — зобов’язаний молитись, виконувати недільний обов’язок. Але треба пояснити, чому, як і коли. Наприклад, священники зобов’язані

до моління Часослова, але чи треба священника зобов’язувати? Чи не прийшов час задля спасіння автентичної літургійної молитви розвинути богослов’я привілею церковної молитви, висловленого у своїй проповіді Генрі Ньюманом: “Розглядаючи це питання (літургійної молитви) у світлі привілею, я не мушу звинувачувати когось за те, що він не прийшов. Я кажу йому: якщо ти не приходиш, то дуже багато втрачаєш. Очевидно, для цього є вагомі причини, адже на тобі лежать обов’язки, пов’язані з твоїм земним покликанням, яке ставить свої вимоги; ти повинен служити, як Марта, і не маєш вільного часу, як мала Марія. Нехай так; і все ж ти втрачаєш, як втратила Марта тоді, коли Марія була при Ісусових ногах. Ти втрачаєш; я не кажу, що Бог не може це тобі компенсувати; ... Ти лише спробуй зрозуміти, що безперервна молитва і прослава є привілеєм; лише щиро відчуй те, чого більшість християн чомусь все-таки не усвідомлює, — що «добре нам тут бути»; відчуй, як це відчували перші християни, коли вони не могли зібратися через переслідування, або як святий Давид, коли він кликав «Душа моя спрагнена Бога, Бога живого! Коли я прийду й появлюсь перед Божим лицем?» (Пс. 42:2) — відчуй це, і мені не треба буде домагатися твого приходу; ти прийдеш, якщо зможеш”¹.

(продовження буде)

1 J. H. Newman. Sermon on the Daily Office // Parochial and plain sermons, у 8-ми томах, т. 3. London - Oxford - Cambridge 1870, с. 310–311.

LITURGICAL LIFE IN THE PARISH
LITURGICAL PRAYER -
THE SOURCE AND "PROFESSION" OF THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

December 18, 2012
Bishop BENEDICT (Aleksiychuk)
Head of the Liturgical Commission of the Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church

Contemporary Liturgical Life
(continued)

Paraliturgical Worship Services

Today, in most urban and rural parishes primary importance over and above the cycle of daily Liturgical Worship Services is being given to various paraliturgical practices, such as: Molebens to the Mother of God in May and Molebens to our Lord in June, First Friday of the Month Molebens, and even Sunday Molebens. Thus, the prayer life of parishes is not synchronized with the normal rhythm of Liturgy. People are searching for spiritual and prayerful depth, but are unable to discover it in their own Liturgical Worship Services, because their understanding and comprehension of these services is so deeply unsatisfactory. They are discouraged by one of two things: on the one hand, we have the complexity of the Ordo-Ustav-Typikon by those who try to keep to it *in toto*; but, on the other hand, we have the unnecessary sporadic abbreviations of the worship services, which reductions do not alleviate but rather confuse the already complex structure of our Horologion. We have parishes where Molebens, Akathists and Stations of the Cross are led by the faithful without the presence of any priests. This is not something new. This problem - posed by having, on the one hand, the normal cycle of Liturgical Worship Services required by the Ordo-Ustav-Typikon and then, on the other hand, simple practices of a paraliturgical nature, - has already been discussed by liturgists and liturgiologists of both Eastern and Western Churches at the beginning of the 20th century. According to the Constitution on the

Sacred Liturgy paraliturgical services may provide a good experience, but they must be adapted to fit into the fullness of the liturgical tradition of the Church: "Popular devotions of the Christian people are to be highly commended, provided they accord with the laws and norms of the Church ... But these devotions should be so drawn up that they harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy, are in some fashion derived from it, and lead the people to it, since, in fact, the liturgy by its very nature far surpasses any of them." (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 13).

In this context, in the interests of preserving the paschal-resurrectional character of Sunday, taking into account the pastoral situation of a contemporary parish [in Ukraine], we should consider the creation of a kind of Moleben of Pascha wherein the service would center upon the reading of one of the 11 Gospels of the Resurrection and have as its major components those parts of the already existing Byzantine Liturgy of Matins, which have been identified by scholars as reminiscent of the "cathedral office" from of old.

Our failure to provide for the worthy liturgical life of the parish by having an insufficient number of priests.

Priests generally agree that for the most part liturgical prayer life in rural parishes is not satisfactory, but it is also true that they simply cannot lead such a prayer life because they are often assigned to 2-3 parishes. There are problems with priests residing in one parish and having to travel to other parishes. There

exists an even greater problem with the priests not being able to provide a Liturgical Worship Service of due quality. Often there is haste and carelessness in the celebration of the worship service. Often we [clergy] may not notice this, but those worshippers who expect these services to be high-quality festive experiences are beginning to respond to this in their letters to us, saying: “Is it possible to rush on Holy Days? Is this permitted in the Church? We would have expected our presbyters to serve on Holy Days with majesty and dignity, singing in a way that would underscore the festal feelings of worth and celebration, and not cheapening the litany by speeding through it ... But no. Maybe somewhere else the Liturgy is being served majestically, however - not among us. Even on Holy Days we are forever at the mercy of “pedal to the metal.” It is as if we were oppressed either by some sort of everlasting spirit of impatience or by crystallized tongues ... Tell me, how often have you heard a well done litany? How many times a year? Does this method even still exist anywhere, wherein the petitions which are sung by the deacon or presbyter are responded to by a choir or people in a true dialogic manner and not with a terrible and murderous haste superimposed upon the “Lord, have mercy” or “Grant it, O Lord?” ... This is nothing more than pseudo-shepherding. They claim so-called “pastoral expediency”, but in actuality they are sacrificing every kind of beauty and healthy liturgical sense. They say, “The people must have their “Divine Services””, but if you were to ask them about the “quality” of this “having,” they answer “what concern is that of ours?”

Such remarks may indicate this problem in our liturgical life: a complete lack of awareness as to Whom we are standing in front of, to Whom we are addressing our petitions and prayers; we have no idea Who is serving us and Whom we are serving.

Prayer as a duty

We often take prayer as an obligation. The Christian person, and by this we mean the member of the parish – whether they are in the ranks of the priesthood or in the ranks of the faithful, is bound by the duty of praying; they are to fulfill their Sunday obligation. But you have to explain the “why”, “how” and “when”. For example, we say that priests have the duty to pray from the Book of Hours (Horologion), but need they be obliged to this? Is it not high time, for the sake of saving authentic liturgical prayer, to develop a theology that considers ecclesiastical prayer to be a privilege, as was proclaimed by Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman, in one of his sermons, as follows: “Considering it in the light of a privilege, I am not obliged to blame a man for not coming. I say to him, if you cannot come, then you have a great loss. Very likely you are right in not coming; you have duties connected with your temporal calling which have a claim on you; you must serve like Martha, you have not the leisure of Mary. Well, be it so; still you have a loss, as Martha had while at Jesus’ feet. You have a loss; I do not say God cannot make it up to you; ... only try to realize to yourself that continual prayer and praise is a privilege; only feel in good earnest, what somehow the mass of Christians, after all, do not recognize, that “it is good to be here” – feel as the early Christians felt when persecution hindered them, from meeting, or, as holy David, when he cried out, “My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the Living God; when shall I come to appear before the presence of God? (Ps. 42:2)” feel this, and I shall not be solicitous about your coming; you will come if you can.”¹

1 J. H. Newman. “Volume III, Sermon 21: the Daily Service”, Parochial and plain sermons, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997), p. 680; originally published in 8 volumes: (London - Oxford – Cambridge: Longmans, Green, 1870), Vol. 3, pp. 310–311.

Dormition Fast – August 1-14th

Each year the Church observes a 2 week fast from August 1st through 14th, the Dormition (or “Falling Asleep”) of the Mother of God. This great feast is called the “Summer Pascha” as it commemorates the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of the Mother of God. As with all the fasting periods, we should take stock of our lives through serious reflection and we should also avail ourselves of the Holy Mystery of Confession.



The Feast of the Transfiguration August 6th

This feast, one of the 12 Great Feasts, recalls how the Lord revealed His divine glory to His disciples on Mt. Tabor. On this feast we bless fruit as a symbol of transfiguration, new life, and God’s gifts. Please bring fruit for blessing after the Divine Liturgy.



Від Катехизму “Христос наша Пасха”

Богослужбові постави та жести

Стояння – це молитовна постава християнина, яка виражає духовну увагу й готовність виконати Божу волю: «Премудрість, прості [станьмо прямо]». Наше «стояння» перед Господом є знаком нашої участі у Воскресінні. За словами Тертуліана, «у неділю не можна постити, ані молитися на колінах. Цей звичай зберігаємо також від дня Пасхи аж до Зішестя Святого Духа»¹. Також і 20 правило I Нікейського собору приписує: «Оскільки дехто творить коліноприклонні молитви в День Господній, а також у дні П’ятдесятниці, то для того, щоби в усіх єпархіях усі дотримувалися одного, завгодно святому соборові, щоб усі приносили молитви Богові стоячи». (#627)

1 ТЕРТУЛІАН, *Про корону*, 3.

PARISH COMMITTEES

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Stephen Hojsan
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Святого Йоана Хрестителя
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Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church**

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From the Acts of the Apostles

Then the apostles and presbyters, in agreement with the whole church, decided to choose representatives and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. The ones chosen were Judas, who was called Barsabbas, and Silas, leaders among the brothers. This is the letter delivered by them: "The apostles and the presbyters, your brothers, to the brothers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia of Gentile origin: greetings. Since we have heard that some of our number [who went out] without any mandate from us have upset you with their teachings and disturbed your peace of mind, we have with one accord decided to choose representatives and to send them to you along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, who have dedicated their lives to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. So we are sending Judas and Silas who will also convey this same message by word of mouth: 'It is

the decision of the Holy Spirit and of us not to place on you any burden beyond these necessities, namely, to abstain from meat sacrificed to idols, from blood, from meats of strangled animals, and from unlawful marriage. If you keep free of these, you will be doing what is right. Farewell.'"

And so they were sent on their journey. Upon their arrival in Antioch they called the assembly together and delivered the letter. When the people read it, they were delighted with the exhortation. Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, exhorted and strengthened the brothers with many words. After they had spent some time there, they were sent off with greetings of peace from the brothers to those who had commissioned them. (Acts 15:22-33)

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