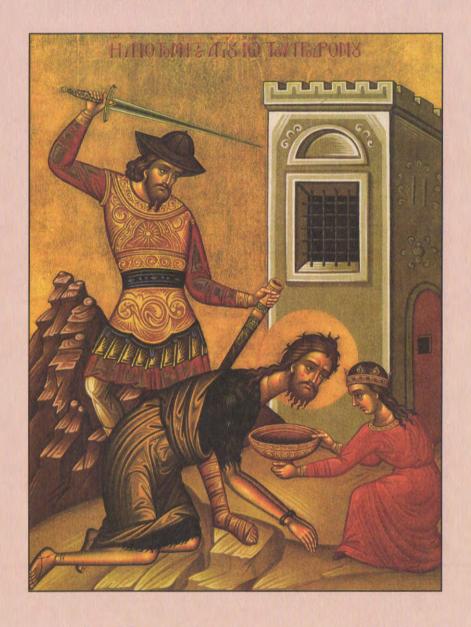
TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST TWELFTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW



Icon of the Beheading of Saint John the Baptist -- August 29th



August 27, 2017 TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST OUR VENERABLE FATHER POEMEN THE GREAT

TONE 3

Schedule of Services for August 28 – September 3

Tuesday, August 29 — Beheading of the Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptizer John

Please Note: No Liturgy since Fr. James will be attending the Enthronement of the New Chaldean Bishop

Sunday, September 3 — Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost; The Holy Hieromartyr Anthimus, bishop of

Nicomedia; Our Venerable Father Theoktistus, fellow faster of Euthymius the Great

8:45 AM – Divine Praises

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

For All Parishioners

Parish Picnic Mark your calendars:

Saturday September 23rd

11:00 AM at Crown Point Park, Mission Bay. Hamburgers, hotdogs, drinks. Activties for all. Bring your lawn chairs.

Cost: 10 years of age and younger \$5.00

11 and up - \$15.00

True Success

By Fr. Theodore Stylianopoulos

Many people labor under the wrong concept of success. This is the idea of achieving possessions, status, or power. A person's self-image is measured by what he or she earns or possesses, by what he or she socially can do or economically control. However, the Saints teach another radically different concept of success based on faithfulness and discipleship. True success is measured by the depth of one's personal communion with God, concern for the salvation of souls and the advancement of the Kingdom. A truly successful person is a saint – one who seeks wholeness in God, who strives to grow in the image of Christ, who finds fulfillment and happiness in loving and serving others for God's glory.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Most people come to church because of a personal invitation.
- ❖ Only 2% of church—going people invite someone to church in a given year. That means 98% of church—goers never extend an invitation in a given year!
- ❖ 7 out of 10 unchurched people have never been invited to church in their whole lives.
- ❖ 82% of the unchurched are at least somewhat likely to attend church if invited.
- The top "rational" reason adults seldom or never attend church is they don't agree with organized religion or what they preach (24 percent).
- The top "practical" reasons for hardly attending or missing church altogether, 21 percent said they don't have time or they don't get around to it.
- Children and youth who attend religious services weekly, exhibit fewest behavior problems, are more likely to have high quality relationships with their parents, and are more likely to exhibit positive social behavior, including showing respect for teachers and neighbors, getting along with other children, understanding other people's feelings, and trying to resolve conflicts with classmates, family or friends.

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE IN DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

July 3, 2017 · Fr. Stephen Freeman

A very poignant question was sent privately to me after my last post. It asked how I was able to go about my parish work when I was battling with depression and anxiety. I have pondered the question over the past week. On one level, I felt a sense of personal astonishment that, in hindsight, it had all been possible. There were very few days through the decades where I was unable to get on with things. So, what did I do? Or, perhaps better, what did God do?

At some point in my life, I began to think of the depression and anxiety much like a broken leg or a sore throat. We never say, "I am a broken leg, or I am a sore throat." But when we are anxious or depressed we say, "I am depressed, I am anxious." Strangely, it makes a difference. It is certainly the case that having a broken leg can interfere with any number of activities. It could cause enough pain that medication and rest would be required. Depression and anxiety are no different.

To my mind, it's possible to be "depressed" about being "depressed." And this leads to a terrible paralysis. Spiritually we begin to agree with our adversary. Not only do we suffer the pain of such a feeling but we have to tolerate his taunts of "look how depressed you are! What kind of a Christian are you? Give up! Quit!" and the like. He is a liar. I often thought that it was important to act in a manner that contradicted the depression and anxiety simply to infuriate our adversary. There is some joy in ruining his day.

I am describing certain aspects of my inner life that I can only speak to for myself. I do not know if these strategies would be of help to anyone else. I have often thought of others who carry very debilitating chronic diseases and think that my own struggles are quite minor by comparison. I have developed a strong interest in the stories of those who endured the Gulag and the other prisons of our time. Nothing in my life begins to compare to even the shadow of their ordeals. This was not a practice that "cheered me up." Rather, it was a practice that encouraged me to be patient, ask for their prayers, and, as much as possible, to ignore the inconvenience of my brain.

Parish work is blessedly composed largely of two things: pastoral care for others and prayer in the altar before God. Both are salutary and of deep benefit. I think there were many times that my prayer life was reduced to little more than "arrow prayers" through the day ("God help me!" Lord, have mercy!" "Glory to God for all things!" etc.) and the blessing of liturgical prayer in the altar. There have certainly been many times that, standing in the altar, I could not "feel" anything of which I spoke. But I prayed quietly that God would receive it as though I did.

And all of this has been within God's mercy. He has sustained me. I prefer not to share the worst of my days and my failings – those belong to my confessor and are well-enough known to those immediately around me. I am convinced, however, of the goodness of God. Much of that conviction, for many years, was rooted in the examples I saw in the lives of other people because I could not see it in mine. I see it more clearly now, I think, partly as a function of getting older. There's enough scenery in my rear-view mirror that I can now see the unmistakable pattern of divine goodness. One strategy against depression and anxiety is to outlive it!

The Elder Thaddeus spoke about profound changes in his own life that came with a true acceptance of Divine providence. To some small degree that has been part of my own experience. There is a strong physical component in depression and anxiety, but there is an equally strong component of self-talk and habits of thought. Extended meditation and confession of God's good work in all things has served, especially over the past few years, to calm my soul and preserve my joy. All of the things that cause anxiety or are objects of depression simply do not matter. They are of no consequence in the last analysis.

Four years ago, I had a heart attack. As such things go, it was minor, but certainly served as a mortality check-up. St. Paul said that we should "reckon ourselves dead to sin." I reckoned myself dead to everything and came to the conclusion that it would be fine. My life has been deeply blessed. Everyone, everywhere, every day, is living on "borrowed" time. Every moment is a gift. If we give thanks for the gift, then we can begin to know that the Giver who has sustained us this far will also give us what we cannot see – a new life in a new world in the depth of union with Him. Of course, writing the blog would be more difficult!

НЕДІЛЯ БАГАТОГО ЮНАКА

Залишити все, щоб іти за Ісусом Матей 19, 16 – 26

Ми надалі залишаємося «маленьким стадом» (Лк. 12, 32). Наступної неділі нас, без сумніву, буде більше в цій нашій спільноті надії, яку утворюємо. А сьогодні, в останню неділю перед святкуванням празника Успення Пресвятої Богородиці, уважно та покірно послухаймо фрагмент Євангелія, запропонований нам. Це Євангеліє є певною мірою Євангелієм Богородиці, і мало би стати Євангелієм усієї Церкви.

Нам було дано, з превеликої Божої ласки – навіть, якщо ми не завжди приймали її – пережити декілька надзвичайних тижнів. Нам було дано можливість пережити той дивовижний перехід до життя, той перехід через «відчуття браку чогось», про говорить у сьогоднішньому Євангелії юнак, значення якого розкриває йому Ісус. Що ми маємо втратити? Що нам було даровано втратити упродовж цих тижнів? Постійно тримаймо в пам'яті той безнастанний заклик, з яким звертається до нас Господь, щоби наполегливо продовжувати свій перехід до життя.

Кожен з нас міг би не те що підсумовувати, — бо тоді ми знову ж дивилися б на своє життя так, немов воно нам належить, — а просто розважити про те, що принесли йому ці останні тижні: втрачені ілюзії чи нові перспективи. Гадаю, кожен з нас мав нагоду усвідомити дещо, про що раніше заледве здогадувався: ким би ми не були, в усіх нас живе жорстокість. У кожному з нас є корені жорстокости, існування яких найчастіше не усвідомлюємо, їх виявлення може супроводжуватися впертою мовчанкою, тишею, але найчастіше вони виявляються у словах. Йдеться тут не про поверхневі

прояви, а про те глибинне зло, що є в нас. У нас живе сила смерти, і цими тижнями ми відкрили в собі її присутність, відкрили ми її, не перебуваючи осторонь подій, а навпаки — беручи в них участь, і Господь пропонує нам зцілити її. Мусимо втратити, так би мовити, скинути баласт тієї сили жорстокости, яка живе в нас, щоб нас наповнив правдивий скарб — Святий Дух, Дух співчуття.

Позаяк у своїх судженнях завжди шукаємо відповідального, винного, адже завжди маємо спокусу встановлювати дистанцію відносно всіх і кожного, та сила злости не забариться знову з'явитися в нас наступними днями. Щоразу, коли ми це усвідомлюватимемо, прямуймо тим темним переходом — переходом смерти для самих себе — залишмо свою злість і дозвольмо, щоби Дух співчуття, Який бажає, щоб усі люди жили, якими вони не були б, наповнив нас.

Ми усвідомили також, що мусимо давати життя. Для нас, того маленького стада, покликаного бути образом свого Бога, покликаного бути Церквою, – це єдиний сенс існування тут. Мусимо давати життя, справжне життя, не тільки надію, а й любов, яка є самим Богом і дає життя. Ми також зрозуміли, що не можемо давати життя, якщо наше серце не перебуває в мирі. І Святий Дух намагався допомогти нам зрозуміти, що можемо отримати мир серця - той, який має Богородиця і її Син – лише якщо певним способом розділятимемо смерть тих, які не перебувають у мирі. Це справді дієве співчуття. Ми зрозуміли також, що той мир, який дає життя, ніколи нам не належить і ніколи не належатиме, бо він даний у дар, сходить до нашого вбогого серця в міру того, наскільки нам його бракує. А ми потребуємо його кожної хвилини! Перечитаймо слова, які каже Ісус напередодні того, як розділити смерть усіх людей, віддаючи своє життя з любови до нас: «Мій мир даю вам; не так, як світ дає...» (Йо. 14, 27). Нам може також цими тижнями було дано зрозуміти, коли ми так чи инакше були приречені перебувати ізольовано, чи, в усякому разі, на самоті, зіткнутися віч-на-віч зі смертю і запитати себе: поряд із ким ми йдемо по життю? Адже хтось завжди присутній біля нас. Може ми відкрили для себе, що, зазвичай, ідемо по життю в присутності лиш самих себе, і, власне, це смертельно, це приносить смерть. Коли ізоляція стає досить інтенсивною, постійне перебування наодинці стає пекельним. Якщо глибше подивитися, ми в ній перебували й раніше, але не усвідомлювали того. Це усвідомлення тепер може стати початком нового звільнення від нас самих, якщо йтимемо по життю поряд з иншими, пам'ятаючи про них чи про їхній образ. Коли вони присутні фізично, це може стати для нас початком звільнення, але справжня їх присутність – це щось зовсім инше. Поки їх присутність для нас не преображена, поки ми не приймаємо инших такими, якими вони є для Господа, Котрий преображує наш погляд, то не йдемо по життю поряд з ними. Ми ходимо біля них, мимохідь торкаємося їх, наштовхуємося на них, але не переживаємо насправді їх присутности. Цими днями кожен з нас міг досвідчити, що насправді означає – йти в присутності Господа, поклавши свою руку в Його. Це та основна присутність у нашому житті, яка звільняє нас від спрямування всередину самих себе і перебування зі самими собою, та відкриває наші серця до постійної присутности инших. І тоді ми знову повертаємося до основного – до того Божого співчуття, яке Богородиця бажає передати нам, яке вона бажає постійно передавати Церкві. Це та безмірна любов, що не знає кордонів, любов аж до смерти – до смерти нашого «я».

Дехто може подумає, що це дещо прикрашена перспектива. Ні! Крізь темряву наших сердець, иноді густу жорстоку, віра розвіяла багато жорсткости, що відділяла нас від Бога та від инших. Щось має розкритися всередині нас, не з примусу, не від того, що опустимо руки чи знеохотимося, а з покірної любови, яка подивляє Бога. Отці Церкви кажуть, що серце людини може піддатися лише тій незмірній вазі кенозису Христа, тому, заради чого Він понизив себе, зробився убогим, применшив себе, щоби дати життя. Ті слова, які сказав Ісус юнакові, Він справді сказав від себе, бо переживав їх зміст у своєму житті. Він усе залишив, усе втратив заради нас. І це правдивий скарб, дарований нам.

Той дар ми щоразу отримуємо на Божественній літургії, і приймемо його знову сьогодні. Разом із Богородицею Співчуття служімо тому Тілу, що несе на собі всі смертельні рани цього світу. Ці рани все більше впадають нам у вічі. Служімо Церкві, перебуваймо в ній, бо вона, повторюю, залишається єдиною силою життя в цій країні. Всі инші сили – то лише сили обману та смерти. Церква – єдина сила, завдяки якій зможемо продовжувати життя в цій країні. Вона є великим даром Божої любови для всіх людей цієї країни.

То ж разом з апостолами ви може спитаете: «Якщо це залежить від нас, "хто ж тоді може бути спасенний?"» (Мт. 19, 25). Для нас це справді неможливо, але можливо для Бога. Перед тим, як Ісус сказав це апостолам, ангел сказав те саме Богородиці. І зараз каже нам.

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

ARE SOLAR ECLIPSES PROOF OF GOD?

By Eric Metaxas Published August 20, 2017

On Monday something will happen in the U.S. that should startle — or at least perplex — anyone who gives it any thought. I am referring to the full solar eclipse you may already be anticipating. To be clear, thinking about what is about to happen has little to do with the sheer visceral experience of being amazed by it, as we must be. Before thinking about it, we should perhaps first simply goggle at it, at the monumental majesty of these monstrously large heavenly orbs, both of which we typically take mostly for granted.

Is it not remarkable that these ever-present objects — though separated by nearly one hundred million miles — should once in a very great while perform this curiously perfect dance? But to what end?

So this sort of thing doesn't happen anywhere else in our solar system. But our planet has just one moon that happens to be just the right size and just the right distance from Earth.

But what might make us start to think a bit about this event is that this celestial pas de deux is being performed only for us. Anywhere but here on this planet on Monday, the view of these two objects is nothing special. It is only what we see from our terrestrial vantage point that is special. It's almost as though what we will marvel at was artfully arranged specifically for our benefit. Which brings us to the curious and startling part of the story.

About fifteen years ago an odd idea popped into my head. Google was just a gurgling infant. But I happened to have a sturdy Brittanica nearby and I pulled out a dusty volume and quickly discovered the diameter of the sun. It is precisely 864,576 miles. The diameter of the moon was listed at 2,159 miles. I then looked up the distance from Earth to the sun, which varies slightly, but is generally given as 93 million miles. And then I found the distance from Earth to the moon. That varies slightly too, so the average is given as 239,000 miles.

Armed with these four figures, I did some simple math. I divided the sun's diameter (864,576) by the moon's (2,159) and got 400.452. If my strange hunch was correct, dividing the distance from the Earth to the sun (93,000,000) by the distance from the Earth to the moon (239,000) should give me something similar. It certainly did. My calculations yielded 389.121. And there it was. I stared at the numbers, amazed. Was the correlation in these ratios mere coincidence?

Of course what this all meant was simply that these immemorially ancient and vast objects, though as different in size as a single BB and a super gigantic beach ball — one that was over six feet in diameter — would from our perspective here on Earth seem almost precisely the same size. So if they ever just happened

to align in the sky, they would match up perfectly. Not almost perfectly. But perfectly, and bizarrely so.

What might be the odds of this just happening randomly? Almost all the planets in our solar system have no moons or many moons (Jupiter has 60) of incredibly varying sizes. So this sort of thing doesn't happen anywhere else in our solar system. But our planet has just one moon that happens to be just the right size and just the right distance from Earth.

I found the precision necessary for all of this unbelievable. The more I thought about it, the more I knew that there was no way this could be a mere coincidence. It seemed almost planned. In fact, it seemed utterly planned, as all things of such precision must be.

To bring this closer to home, imagine holding a BB twelve inches from our face and then asking a friend to carry the six-foot diameter beach ball as far down the beach as necessary — until it appeared precisely the same size from our perspective as the tiny BB. Keep in mind our beach ball is six-feet in diameter while a normal large beach ball is less than two feet in diameter. Our friend would have to hike 400 feet before the giant beach ball and the tiny BB matched up in size. That's about the distance from home plate to the centerfield fence in most major league baseball stadiums.

So can the sun's and moon's diameters — and distances from Earth — be merely coincidentally matched up this perfectly? Everything about it makes that seem ridiculous. But of course you can decide for yourself.

Three thousand years ago a man in Israel wrote: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands." That man didn't have a telescope or a Brittanica, but he saw something many of us today still do not see. He saw a God behind it all. It may be true that seeing a Grand Designer behind these breath-taking events requires what we call a leap of faith; but it may also be true that seeing mere coincidence behind them requires an even greater leap of faith. In my mind, much greater. But on Monday, you may be the judge.

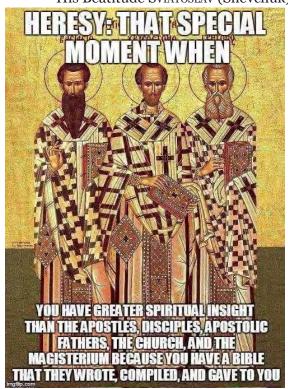
Eric Metaxas is the author of several bestselling books, including "Bonhoeffer" and "Amazing Grace." His latest book is "If You Can Keep It: The Forgotten Promise of American Liberty" (Viking, June 14, 2016).

Ми є вповні православною Церквою із православним богослов'ям, літургікою, духовністю та канонічною традицією, яка прагне проявити це православ'я в дусі християнства першого тисячоліття - у сопричасті з Римом. Християнський Схід і Захід не тільки зобов'язані шукати якогось абстрактного зближення, а й покликані нашим Спасителем жити в єдності єдиного Тіла Христового. Покликані жити в єдності, а не в підкоренні один одному

- Блаженніший Святослав (Шевчук)

We are a fully orthodox Church with orthodox theology, liturgies, spirituality, and canonical Tradition, which strives to live this orthodoxy in the spirit of first-Millennium Christianity – that is, communion with Rome. The Christian East and West are not only called to achieve some sort of abstract closeness, but are called by our Savior to live in one union within Christ's Body. We are called to live in union with one another, not in conquest for one another.

- His Beatitude Sviatoslav (Shevchuk)



Sunday offering for August 20

Amount	Number
\$10.00	1
\$15.00	2
\$20.00	1
\$25.00	1
\$29.00	1 (loose)
\$30.00	1 `
\$40.00	2
\$50.00	2
\$75.00	2
\$105.00	2
\$150.00	1
\$834.00	

Parishioner Total:

\$834.00

Average / parish household (43): \$10.69 Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2200.00

Deficit: <\$1366>

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 Passion of John the Baptist

Today while the virtue of John and the ferocity of Herod are related to us, our innards were shaken, our hearts trembled, our sight grew dim, our mind became dull, our hearing deserted us. For is there anything within human sensation that remains undisturbed when a large amount of vice destroys a large amount of virtue?

Herod, it says, apprehended John, and had him bound, and put in prison (Mt 14:3). John was the school of the virtues, the instructor of life, the model of sanctity, the pattern of morality, the mirror of virginity, the epitome of purity, the example of chastity, the way of penitence, the pardon of sins, the discipline of faith. John was greater than a human being, equal to the angels, the apex of the Law, the seed of the Gospel, the harbinger of the Apostles, the silence of the prophets, the lamp of the world, the herald of the Judge, the forerunner of Christ, the

preparer for the Lord, the witness of God, the mediator of the whole Trinity.

But Herod is the very one who desecrated the Temple, ruined the priesthood, disturbed its proper order, profaned the kingdom, corrupted anything that had to do with religion, the Law, life and morals, faith, and discipline. Herod was ever an assassin toward his fellow citizens, a brigand toward people of any distinction, a ravager toward his allies, a robber toward those of his own household, a killer of the common folk, a murderer of his children, a slayer of foreigners, a murderer towards his own, drenching the land with gore in his bloodthirstiness. And, so it is that he gulped down the hallowed blood of John from his enormous cup of cruelty.

St. Peter Chrysologus

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