

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
FIRST SUNDAY OF LUKE



Icon of the Mother of God and Saint Thecla -- September 24th



September 24, 2017

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTCOST;
THE HOLY PROTOMARTYR AND EQUAL-TO-THE-APOSTLES THECLA

TONE 7

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR SEPTEMBER 25 – OCTOBER 1

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28S

3:00 PM – Service of internment for Mary Kitt

Holy Cross Cemetery, 4470 Hilltop Dr, San Diego, CA 92102

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

11:00 AM – Parastas for Mary Kitt

6:00 PM – Great Vespers

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1 – SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTCOST; PROTECTION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD;

THE HOLY APOSTLE ANANIAS, ONE OF THE SEVENTY;

OUR VENERABLE FATHER ROMAN THE MELODIST;

PASSING INTO ETERNAL LIFE (1949) OF BLESSED NYKYTA (NICETAS) BUDKA, FIRST BISHOP OF CANADA, AND CONFESSOR OF KARAGANDA

8:45 AM – Divine Praises

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

For All Parishioners

Services for Mary Kitt

Thursday, September 28

3:00 PM – Internment at Holy Cross Cemetery
4470 Hilltop Dr,
San Diego, CA 92102

Saturday, September 30

11:00 AM – Parastas at St. John the Baptizer
followed by memorial luncheon.

PARISH PICNIC – THANK YOU!

A tremendous “Thank You” to all the wonderful volunteers who helped make this a successful event. To Luke Miller for securing the site from early Saturday morning, to Olga and Chef Michael Miller (the Game Meister), to all those who prepared the delicious food, and to those who set up and cleaned up. May God bless you all for your generous giving of your Time, Talent and Treasure. Дуже Дякую!

Роздуми від Владики Венедикта

Мати добре здоров'я – великий дар від Бога, однак часто ми це усвідомлюємо лише тоді, коли хворіємо. А наскільки більшим даром є можливість мати добре духовне здоров'я. Кожна людина в глибині свого серця усвідомлює свої гріхи, але, ніби адвокат, виправдовує себе, свої вчинки. Тому важливо постійно аналізувати свій душевний стан, каятися й шукати Божого прощення.

Сповідь – це великий дар, який дав нам Бог, однак не для того, щоб ми користали ним лише час від часу. Якщо усвідомлюємо свій гріх – більше чи менше, – то завжди якнайшвидше приходьмо до Бога, перепрошуймо Його і змінюємося. Бо ж каже Господь: «Хто без гріха?» Хіба ми буваємо без гріха? Тому частіше прибігаймо до Бога з покаянням, взиваючи про прощення, і так швидше переміняємося, станемо досконалішими, праведними та святими.

A Reflection from Bishop BENEDICT

Having good health is a great gift from God, but often we only realize it when we are sick. And how much greater a gift is the opportunity to have good spiritual health. Every person understands his sins in the depths of his heart, but just like the lawyer he tries to justify himself and his actions. Therefore, it is important to constantly analyze your state of mind, repent and seek God's forgiveness.

Confession is a great gift given to us by God, but not for us to use only from time to time. If we realize our sin, we will always come to God as soon as possible, ask Him for forgiveness and then change. For the Lord says: “Who is without sin?” Do we go without sin? Therefore, we should often turn to God with repentance, crying for forgiveness, and changing quickly, becoming more perfect, righteous and saintly.

Покликання перших учнів

Лука 5, 1 – 11

Відновити нашу першу любов

Покликання перших учнів було першим даром Божим, з якого народилася Церква. Через нього Ісус запрошує нас, як каже Дух Церквам (Од. 2, 4), «відновити нашу першу любов». Адже Церква – це всі ми, і тому поклик Ісуса повинен викликати в нас не приголомшення, як у перших учнів, а радісне зачудування. Бо справді, дивно, що ми покликані працювати разом з Творцем, співпрацювати з Ним, щоб дати Його творінням справжнє вічне життя. У Церкві нема ні безробітних, ні тих, хто шукає роботу! Кожна охрещена людина покликана давати життя у Христі, життя Отця, яке Він довірив нам у своєму Синові.

Четверо перших учнів ніколи не забудуть тієї чудесної риболовлі, яка перевернула їхнє життя. І ми також у своєму житті, яким коротким воно не було б, отримали стільки знаків, знаків присутності Ісуса, Який є біля нас і працює з нами! Ті знаки мали б викликати в нас зачудування, піднести нас у вірі і втримати у благодаті.

Щоранку Ісус кличе нас. Чому ми вагаємося? Ми не кажемо ні слова, бо бачимо, як мало плодів приносить те, що ми робимо. Якою не була б наша робота – наш державний обов'язок, як її називають – нема гарантії, що завдяки нам Христос дасть життя Отця багатьом своїм дітям. Петро та його товариші трудилися всього одну ніч, але як не зневіритися нам після стількох місяців і років?

Петро поборов свою першу спокусу. Нам здається, що у спокусі нам ніщо не допоможе: у час глобалізації зростає потуга зла, суспільство не змінюється, і люди теж. Але чому б мені не змінитися, не стати люблячішим? Господь не зневіряється ні в кому. Тому щоранку, аби знову мати відвагу братися до роботи і

продовжувати місію Христа в Церкві, ми мали б запитати себе, на що покладаємося. Якщо я покладаюся сам на себе, то нема жодної надії, що моя праця принесе плоди, бо в такому випадку я працюю сам, виконую свою роботу, але що з того? Моя робота безплідна.

Та якщо я починаю слухати Отця, то народжуюся до життя. Ісус – це Його Слово, Слово, яке перебуває в мені, я довіряю Йому беззастережно і на Його слово закидаю сіті. Яким безнадійним не було б становище, ми отримуємо безмірну Божу щедрість. Хоча ми, звичайно, не здатні досягнути тих щедрих дарів, вони дадуть нам життя. Церква – це Тіло Господа. Тіло Христове живе, воно сильніше за смерть, воно живить нас в Євхаристії, щоб ми стали Його животворним Тілом «для багатьох».

Не дивуймося, що не бачимо видимих результатів. Ми покладаємося на Слово, а тому можемо закидати сіті. Якби ми хотіли результатів, що винагороджували б нашу працю, це означало б, що ми шукаємо себе, тимчасом як треба «покинути все» і йти слідом за Ісусом. «Покинути все»! Це не означає, що мусимо віддати навіть свій плащ, як Франциск з Асизу. Необхідно не покладатися на будь-які людські сили, на будь-що поза Ісусом, довіряти виключно Йому і йти за Ним.

Просімо у всемогутнього Святого Духа, щоб відновив нашу віру і любов. Будьмо певні, що плідність Церкви залежить від кожного з нас – вона залежить від нашої віри. Отець дає життя всім своїм дітям саме через нашу віру в свого улюбленого Сина.

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

CLOTHED IN THE IMAGE

August 28, 2017 · Fr. Stephen Freeman

Begging my readers' patience, I will take a small anthropologist tour through our culture. What I want to draw our attention to is the place of the image. We are not only fascinated with looking at images, we place them on our bodies as well: t-shirts, tattoos, hats, shoes, pants - in short, everywhere. There is nothing unusual in this. Were we to examine primitive tribes, we would notice a vast assemblage of image-markings. People cover themselves with colorful muds, distort certain parts of their bodies, do amazing things with hair, dress themselves in utterly impractical costumes. Something is at work in the human soul that is demonstrated in all of these behaviors. My suggestion is that it is an effort to live "according to the image."

Clothing is mentioned with an essential role in the Genesis account of human beginnings. Our sin plunges us into shame. We are "naked" and seek to "hide." The theological unpacking of this reality is deeply important in Scripture, particularly in the New Testament. But it also reflects a simple human experience. The naked truth of ourselves is generally experienced in a shameful manner. That is to say that we feel exposed, vulnerable and in danger when various aspects of that truth are seen by others. And so, we cover up.

God provided Adam and Eve "garments of skin" in Genesis 3. Those garments have been deeply elaborated on ever since. Perhaps the deepest commentary on this is found in St. Paul:

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. (Gal. 3:27)

This would probably be more accurately rendered, "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ as a garment." The word "put on" (*ἐνεδύσασθε*) specifically refers to "putting on" a garment. This "putting on" is the true and spiritual fulfillment of which all efforts to clothe ourselves are a mere reflection, and often one of deep distortion.

I take us back to my first observation: we universally seek to cover or mark ourselves with something. Our appearance is a canvas which

we cannot help but disguise. And, following Genesis, we can observe that we desperately want to cover or mark ourselves in order to disguise our shame - in one form or another.

It can be argued that we wear clothes because it is too sunny or cold. But our clothing long ago transcended the practical need of hairless animals. Our clothing, like most of our lives, reflects psychological and spiritual issues more than anything. The state of our soul is often on display for anyone who understands the nature of the great human cover-up.

A frequent element of our covering is the projection of power. We use various symbols and clues as signals. Identifying ourselves with a team proclaims the power of a tribe: we are not alone. Much of our political signals are aggressive in nature, not surprising in a culture in which almost all citizens feel largely powerless. Our coverings can signal beauty, strength, anger, sexual desire, any number of things in the cultural dance surrounding inner shame.

The modern fashion of tattooing (more prominent in America than Europe) is a deeper form of covering, at least in its permanence. It strikes me as interesting that such a permanent form of covering should become popular in a culture permeated by impermanence. In my part of the world, it seems less and less common to encounter people who have no tattoos.

Please understand that I am not saying that our clothing and markings are themselves shameful. They are quite the opposite. They represent protective coverings that protect us from the shame we feel and the shaming we encounter in social settings. Our inner shame surrounds our sense of identity. Shame is about "who I am." Our coverings represent an effort to publicly proclaim, "This is who I am," regardless of what might be the case inwardly. As such, our coverings are an attempt to say, "This is who I want you to think I am." Many times these same created coverings are used to hide our inner shame from ourselves. The modern selfie is a fascination with the image, an effort to proclaim an existence and identity in a world where social

media has become a substitute ontology: “I’m online, therefore I exist... And they like me!”

All of this feels intensely personal as I think about it. As an Orthodox priest, I am costumed in almost every setting. In public, I wear a cassock. In Church, I am covered in vestments. But there, the covering is extremely intentional. As he vests, the priest prays:

My soul shall rejoice in the Lord, for He has clothed me with the garment of salvation; He has covered me with the robe of gladness; as a bridegroom He has set a crown on me; and as a bride adorns herself with jewels, so has He adorned me... Your Priests, O Lord, shall clothe themselves with righteousness, and Your saints shall shout with joy always, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

According to Eusebius, St. James, the Brother of the Lord, wore a linen garment like the High Priest when he served in the Church’s assembly. That ancient reality, still enacted in the Liturgy, is a visible “putting on of Christ.” It is Christ who is present and leads us in our offering to the Father. The robing of the priest covers the person of the priest himself (and his shame), in order to present the Lord of glory.

To wear a uniform or costume (I don’t know what else to call it) in public is always to disappear to a certain extent. My own parishioners, when they occasionally see me without the cassock (when I’m out for a walk, etc.), do not always recognize me - at least not at first glance. It reminds me that I am not “me” to them, but “their priest.” My late Archbishop used to forbid priests to wear things like bathing suits in front of their parishioners. If we wanted to swim, we needed to go somewhere else.

It is possible to lose yourself in such a covering. A priest can begin to mistake himself for the robe he wears. Indeed, I think some are drawn to the priesthood precisely because they want to lose themselves - and for the wrong reasons. We can clothe ourselves outwardly, but if the clothing only hides our shame and does not transform it, then it becomes part of the sickness in our lives that binds us to our shame.

Just as our first experience of shame was

our “nakedness” (the emptiness of our existence in the presence of God), so our salvation is expressed in terms of being clothed:

Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, putting away falsehood, let every one speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. (Eph. 4:22-25)

The “new nature,” created “after the likeness of God,” is nothing other than the very righteousness of Christ, described as a garment. But this is more than a garment - it is a “nature,” meaning that it no longer represents a garment that hides us, but something that changes us, so that the inside (“nature”) matches the outside (“righteousness of Christ”). We can be seen exactly as we are - without shame.

It is noteworthy that St. Paul completes the admonition with the commandment to “speak the truth.” This is the opposite of what takes place in almost all of our various cultural versions of clothing. What you see of others is never “who they are,” but what they want you to see, an effort that is rarely successful.

However, our holy transformation (conformity to the image of Christ) begins in Baptism, and continues as we “speak the truth,” meaning as we “bear a little shame” in the truth of our confession and repentance and in our dealings with others. It is, admittedly, a most difficult thing. The greater our inward fear and the depth of our wounds, the harder it is to trust this work of salvation. By grace, it is possible.

Nearly six years ago I had a very graphic dream that involved my late Archbishop Dmitri. It was some few months after his death. The last words he spoke in the dream have stayed with me: “I believe that soon, we shall all have to stand naked before the judgment seat of Christ.” I did not know then how important those words would become for me. May God clothe us with the righteousness of Christ and conform us inwardly to His image.

LIVING IN THE BODY

Going to church for worship is one element in living as a Christian. *Being church* means making an active contribution to the Church's life, being a vital organ in a living body.

The first step in being church is being connected to others in our parish by:

- **Cultivating community** in the "fellowship of the Holy Spirit." Get to know one another in a more than casual way.
- **Treating others as brothers and sisters in the family** of God in Christ. Give others the time and attention we would give to our blood relatives.
- "Above all, **clothing yourselves with love**, which binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Colossians 3:14).



We nurture the relationships in the parish or the eparchy when we:

- ✧ **Share our lives** – Authentic fellowship calls for more than coffee-hour courtesies. Grow to the stage when you can share your troubles as well.
 - ✧ **Learn together** - Take part in adult formation, retreats, or workshops to encourage others as well as to improve our own spiritual life.
 - ✧ **Work together** - Join in parish projects or committees to support the work of others as well as to make our own contribution. *"So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith"* (Galatians 6:10).
 - ✧ **Encourage each other** – by supporting their efforts, praying for their concerns and building them up in the eyes of others. *"Love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor"* (Romans 12:10).
 - ✧ **Bear one another's burdens** – Be accepting of the weaker community members. There is no "perfect" church: every parish is made up of "saints" who are sinners, each with their own weaknesses and infirmities. *"Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ"* (Galatians 6:2).
 - ✧ **Admonish one another** – Do not shrink from confronting "family members" who are hurting others by promoting conflicts, pettiness, or legalism. *"My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Take care that you yourselves are not tempted"* (Galatians 6:1).
 - ✧ **Protect the unity of the church** – by avoiding gossip or cliques, and speaking ill of others.
 - ✧ **Restore broken relationships** – when they occur by admitting our faults. No project or program is worth harming the family's inner life. *"If anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive"* (Colossians 3:13).
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WORDS EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD KNOW

Holiness consists not only in the absence of evil or sin: holiness is the presence of higher spiritual values, joined to purity from sin. God is the only one holy by nature. He is the Source of holiness for angels and men. Men can attain holiness only in God, “not by nature, but by participation, by struggle and prayer” (St. Cyril).

Asceticism is man’s struggle to keep the commandments of Christ. It encompasses not only his bodily and spiritual effort, but also the method by which he passes through the three stages of the spiritual life, namely: purification, illumination, and deification (union with God).

Purification refers to the process by which one is cleansed from the passions through: 1) the rejection of all evil thoughts and desires from the mind and heart, 2) the turning of the soul’s three powers (reason, desire, and will) towards God, and 3) the overcoming of self-love by love for God and neighbor.

Illumination refers to the process by which the grace of the Holy Spirit, received in Baptism, enlightens the person purified (or at least being purified) of the passions to the true knowledge of God and creation. Illumination is seen primarily in the gift of discernment by which one distinguishes between 1) what is from God or above nature, 2) what is according to nature or good, and 3) what is unnatural or evil.

Deification is union with God, the goal of Christian life; experienced in part during this life, but more fully and unendingly in the next. Scripture says that God is a consuming fire. When man is united with God in the state of pure prayer, he becomes entirely engulfed in the flame of divine love and sees the Uncreated Light of Divinity. This state cannot be described in words but is known only through experience. Union with God imparts immeasurable love, humility, and thankfulness. Deification is what man was created for from the beginning; it is what makes man truly man.

Be generous when you worship the Lord, and do not stint the first fruits of your hands.

With every gift show a cheerful face, and dedicate your tithe with gladness.

Give to the Most High as he has given to you, and as generously as you can afford.

For the Lord is the one who repays, and he will repay you sevenfold.

(Sirach 35:10-13)

Добрими очима хвали Господа,
первоплодів рук твоїх не поменшуй.

При всяких приносінах будь веселий
обличчям, посвяту десятини вчиняй із
радістю.

Воздавай Всевишньому згідно з його
даром - щедро за твоїми власними
статками;

Господь бо тобі відплатить, поверне тобі
всемеро.

(Сирах 35:7-10)

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**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква
Святого Йоана Хрестителя
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Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church**

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The Holy Martyr Thecla

According to a popular second century tale, the Acts of Paul and Thecla, St. Thecla was a native of Iconium. She was so impressed by the preaching of St. Paul on virginity that she broke off her engagement to marry Thamyras to live a life of virginity. When Paul was ordered to be scourged and banished from the city for his teaching, Thecla was ordered burned to death. When a storm providentially extinguished the flames, she escaped with Paul and went with him to Antioch. There she was condemned to wild beasts in the arena when she violently resisted the attempt of Syriarch Alexander to kidnap her, but again escaped when the beasts did no harm to her.

She rejoined Paul at Myra in Lycia, dressed as a boy, and was commissioned by him to preach the Gospel. She did for a time in Iconium and then became a recluse in a cave at Meriamlik near Seleucia. She lived as a hermit there for the next seventy-two years and died there (or in Rome, where she was miraculously transported when she found that Paul had died, and was later buried near his tomb). The tale had tremendous popularity in the early Church but is undoubtedly a pious fiction and was labeled apocryphal by St. Jerome. It is possible that St. Paul had a disciple named Thecla who was martyred. Some scholars are of the opinion that this is in fact the case.

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