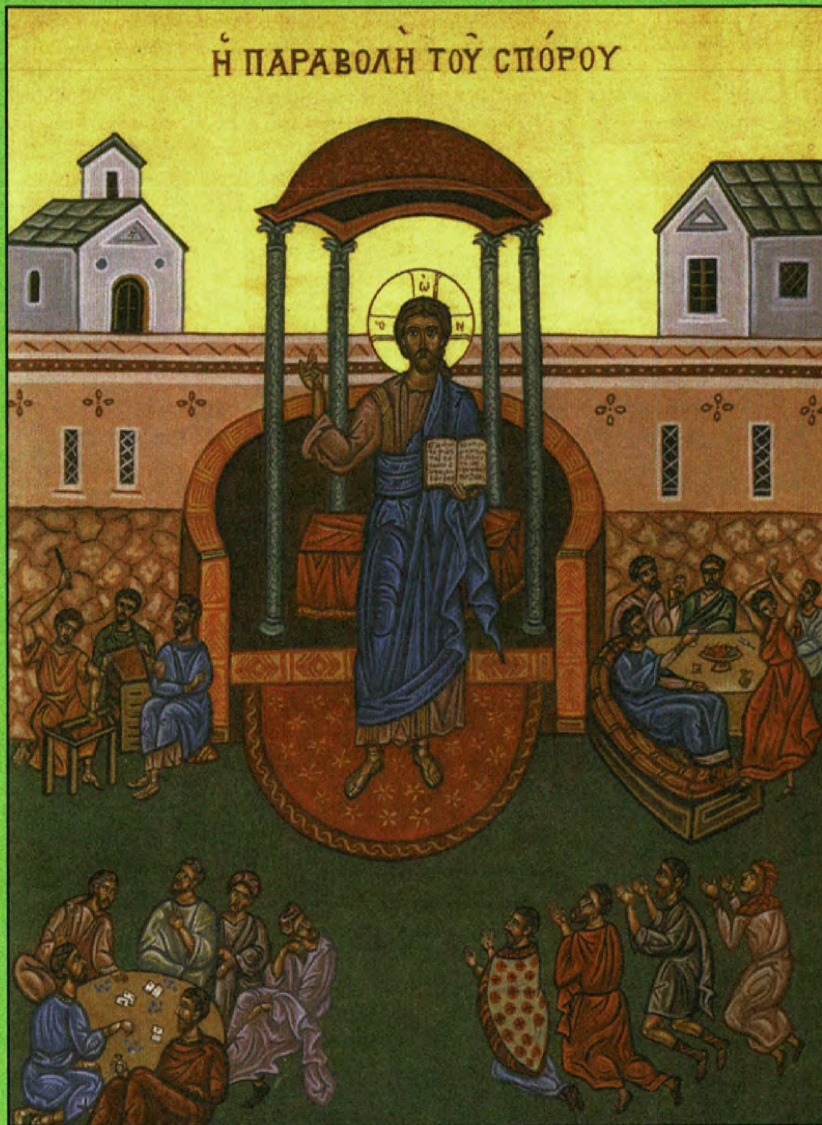


SUNDAY OF THE FATHERS OF THE
SEVENTH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL



Icon of the Parable of the Sower and the Seed



October 15, 2017

SUNDAY OF THE FATHERS OF THE SEVENTH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL
OUR VENERABLE FATHER EUTHYMIUS THE NEW
THE HOLY VENERABLE MARTYR LUCIAN, PRESBYTER OF GREATER ANTIOCH

TONE 2

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR OCTOBER 16 – OCTOBER 22

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21 – OUR VENERABLE FATHER HILARION THE GREAT

9:30 AM – DIVINE LITURGY AND PANAKHYDA + MARY KITT - 40TH DAY.

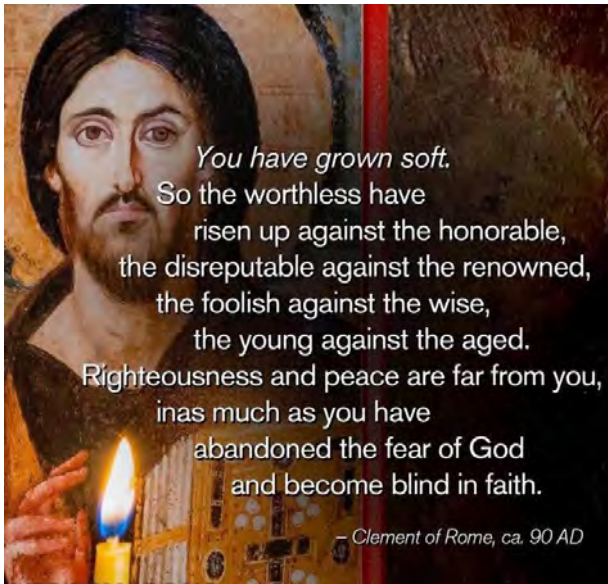
6:00 PM – Great Vespers (satisfies Sunday obligation)

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22 – TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; THE HOLY AND EQUAL-TO-THE-APOSTLES

ABERCIOUS, BISHOP AND WONDERWORKER OF HIERAPOLIS; THE SEVEN HOLY YOUTHS OF EPHESUS:

MAXIMILIAN, JAMBLICUS, MARTINIAN, DIONYSIUS, ANTONINUS, EXACUSTODIAN AND JOHN

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners



“Possibly a contentious unbeliever will maintain that we worshiping images in our churches are convicted of praying to lifeless idols. Far be it from us to do this. Faith makes Christians, and God, who cannot deceive, works miracles. We do not rest contented with mere colouring. With the material picture before our eyes we see the invisible God through the visible representation, and glorify Him as if present, not as a God without reality, but as a God who is the essence of being. Nor are the saints whom we glorify fictitious. They are in being, and are living with God; and their spirits being holy, the help, by the power of God, those who deserve and need their assistance.”

+ St. John of Damascus, *Treatise on Images*

Jacob was a cheater, Peter had a temper, David had an affair, Noah was a drunk, Jonah ran from God, Paul was a murderer, Gideon was insecure, Miriam was a gossip, Martha was a worrier, Thomas was a doubter, Sara was impatient, Elijah was moody, Moses stuttered, Zacchaeus was short, Abraham was old, and Lazarus was dead... God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called.



Parish Rummage Sale

There will be a rummage sale on Saturday, November 11 to benefit the parish. We are already accepting donations. Volunteers are needed.

You can bring items after Liturgy or you can contact Olena Bankston at (619) 567-6967 to schedule a time to drop off your donations.

Is Faith Like in the Bible Even Possible?

by the Very Rev. Fr. Andrew Stephen Damick

Only say the word, and my servant will be healed. (Matt. 8:8)

It is hard for us, living in the United States in the year 2017, to imagine feeling the way that that centurion did. He approached Jesus. He asked Him to heal his servant who was lying paralyzed. And when Jesus said that He would go there and heal the man, the centurion said that He needed only to speak the word and the servant would be healed.

If you're at all like me, when you hear about that centurion's faith, it seems almost utterly foreign. He just believed that Jesus could do it, and not only that He could do it, but that He could do it merely by saying a word.

I will be honest and say that even when I pray that God would heal someone or even that God would do any good thing, any thing which I know is perfectly acceptable to ask Him for, it is hard for me to believe that He will do it. And it's also a struggle for me to believe that He's even listening. And it's also a struggle to believe that He's even there at all.

This encounter of the centurion with Jesus is so foreign to us because we live in an age in which unbelief is now entirely plausible. That is, it is not hard for us to imagine that all this that we as Christians say we believe is in fact not really true at all.

We should take note here that the plausibility of complete unbelief in God and in anything of spiritual reality is a relatively new phenomenon, something that has become available to mankind only within the past few centuries. In the time of this centurion and indeed in nearly any other time in history, it was in fact *implausible* to suggest that there was no divinity shaping our ends. It was laughable even to say it. Everyone just took for granted that there was a spiritual realm. It was practically in the air they breathed.

I won't go into the history here of how it came to be that we now struggle between faith and doubt in a way that most of history

has never seen. But we should at least note that that history is not simply a history of more scientific discoveries being made and the unexplainable "gaps" that we used to fill in with "God" explanations getting smaller and smaller. The history is actually a philosophical and cultural history, not a scientific or rational one.

And it is not that mankind is any less religious by any real measure. What has happened is that the way in which he believes has changed. He now is at the mercy of pressure from both faith and doubt.

And make no mistake about it: Unbelievers are also at the mercy of the same forces. Even though they consciously do not believe in anything beyond what we can detect with our physical senses, they are still haunted by the sense that perhaps there is something else. They are also subject to the struggle between faith and doubt.

So what are we supposed to do with this? How can we continue to appropriate moments like this statement of belief from the centurion? Even though he probably does not know that Jesus is the incarnate God-man, that He is the Son of God, the Messiah of Israel, he nevertheless takes it for granted that, based on what he has seen from Jesus, this is a man around Whom spiritual forces move quite powerfully. He just knows it.

Our problem is that we don't. We don't just know it. We can't be expected simply to believe. We do not live in a time and place when that way of believing is possible. Yes, we can grow to have the same faith, but we won't have it in the same way. Our way will be different. So what do we do?

First, we should reconcile for ourselves that the struggle is real and that it is normal. This is where we are in history. Perhaps a day will come again when our descendants will not be subject to the cross-pressure of

faith and doubt, when they will be able to meet Jesus and simply believe in Him. But that's not today. We live in a day when we have to struggle just to keep the faith. We are people of our time.

There is another passage from Scripture which I think is a kind of motto for Christians in the stage of secularism in which we find ourselves, and it comes from another meeting between Jesus and someone who wants Him to heal someone. In Mark 9, a man comes to Jesus and asks Him to heal his son, who is possessed by a demon and often put into physical danger by the possession. Jesus says to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes" (Mark 9:23).

When I hear that, a part of my heart just sinks, because I think to myself, "Do I *really* believe? I'm not sure that I do. I want to believe. I'm trying to believe. But this is really hard sometimes." Well, the response of the man might have been made for me, and it might have been made to serve as a motto for Christians in our age. What does the man say to Jesus in response? He says, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24). And at that, Jesus healed the boy.

That, I believe, is where most of our spiritual labors now should be focused. We stand between belief and unbelief, between faith and doubt, and that's simply where we are at this stage of history. We can't make it go away by trying to fight against some "bad guy" secularism out there that is our true nemesis. The truth is that we have all become secular.

But that doesn't mean that we are all unbelievers. It just means that the way in which we believe has now changed from the way in which many of our forefathers believed. We believe the same things as the Apostles and Fathers, but the way we believe them is different.

So how do we struggle forward? What are we struggling *toward*?

We are struggling toward placing ourselves more fully in the story of Jesus, in the grand narrative that is His coming into

this world, defeating death, establishing His kingdom, winning a people for Himself, and giving commands that govern His covenant with His people.

The more we do that, the more we will find that our faith will be stronger, that our ability to believe will be more like that centurion's. Now, I do not mean that we will find true unbelief implausible in the way that the centurion would have. We can't escape where we are. But we can have that trust in Jesus that he had, and we can have the boldness to pray deeply and fervently for ourselves and for the needs of those who are in this world with us.

As Orthodox Christians, we have a strong cultural memory of whole empires claimed by the Christian faith. And we have a tendency to feel nostalgic for those times and places. But we have to face it—they are gone, and they're not coming back, at least, not any time soon. And we may lament for that loss.

But what should give us courage is that our time, while it is not like the ages of the great Christian empires, is actually more like the age of that centurion who approached Jesus. He was no doubt himself subject to cross-pressure from many belief systems. As a Roman, he was likely raised as a pagan. As an educated man, he likely also knew of the developing Greek philosophical monotheism. And here he was in Judea, with these Jews and their one God and Father. And then he meets Jesus, Who is that one God in the flesh. He is not in an easy position. What must his daily life have been like? What kind of struggle did he have in trying to understand his world?

But he meets Jesus. And he trusts Jesus. And he asks. And he believes. And he receives. We can do that, too. So we struggle onward, forward, praying, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

Притча про сіяча

Лука 8, 5-15

Притча про сіяча має фундаментальне значення – вона виходить зі серця Бога і є підґрунтям справжнього життя для нас. Це притча про рослинний світ, але ми – більше, ніж польова трава, ми є образом Отця. Нашим корінням, нашим початком є те «нетлінне насіння» (див. 1 Пт. 1, 23), з якого ми відроджені наново. Ця таємнича насінина, маленька, непомітна, як пшеничне зернятко, – то вічне Слово Отця, посіяне в нашу людську природу, і якщо ми приймаємо Його, то відроджуємося в Ньому.

Ми можемо безперервно народжуватися до життя Отця, перебуваючи в єдності з Його вічним Словом, яке струменить із нього. Так, нашим джерелом має бути життя Отця, Який так тішиться нами, тому мусимо все більше повертати до Нього своє обличчя і відповідати через самого Сина, бо ми – більше, ніж відлуння Його Слова, ми – плід Його Слова.

Якби ми затрималися біля власного витoku і використали свій дорогоцінний час, живучи там, де насіння Отця народжує нас до життя і кличе

нас! Але більше часу нас там немає, бо ми живемо на рівні загальноприйнятих поглядів, які тягнуть нас у різні боки, тоді як сотворені вільними, як Бог, щоб розділяти Його життя. Отець не нав'язує нам своє слово. Він нам його пропонує. Тому Він знову і знову виходить сіяти своє слово широко, подостатком.

Кожен з нас покликаний перейти від притчі до реальності і запитати себе, роздумуючи над цією притчею, чому моє життя так «незріле», чому воно не прямує до дозрівання свого плоду. Всі ми більшою чи меншою мірою незрілі. А наше призначення – у дозріванні, у досягненні вічної зрілості. Чому ми незрілі? Ми не помічаємо своєї незрілості. Від цього страждають інші, а в Ісусі засмучується наш люблячий Отець.

Невже ми настільки живемо зовнішньо, байдужі до сенсу свого життя, відчужені, немов божевільні? Ми, звичайно, чуємо Його Слово, принаймні, щонеділі, або час до часу з уст дитини чи дорослого, або, коли знаходимо час трохи почитати, читати – це слухати, читати

живе Слово – Євангеліє, псалми, послання апостола Павла, книги пророків... Та навколо такий шум, ми стільки всього чуємо, особливо зараз! Отже, ми ще насправді не слухаємо. Наше серце ніяк не задіяне, з нашого боку нема жодної справжньої відповіді, якщо ми просто слухаємо вухами або читаємо краєм ока. Тоді ми залишаємося край дороги.

Трапляється також, що ми з радістю приймаємо Слово. Воно таке чудесне! Це сам Ісус промовляє до нас! В ньому є все, то як не захоплюватися ним, як не зрадіти? Так, але – і це ще одна форма браку зрілості, – ми не маємо коріння, ми поверхові. Виходимо після Божественної літургії – і все! Нас зачепило якесь слово з Євангелія, і ... ми переходимо до інших справ, нічого не усвідомивши.

Існує ще одна спокуса, яка трапляється частіше. Ми чуємо і в той момент постановляємо бути відданими, тобто відповісти на Слово вірою, прийняти його беззастережно, щоб воно формувало наше життя. Ми відчуваємо зворушення аж до глибини серця. Проте наше серце наповнене багатьма турботами, розбурхане різноманітними

емоціями, і, врешті–решт, ми спокушаємося самі собою, а наше «я» зчиняє такий шум, що цілком заглушує Слово.

Сьогодні, на початку літургійного року, попросімо Ісуса щирим серцем, щоб Дух Святий відкрив глибини нашого серця. Нехай Він навчить нас хотіти приймати Його в тиші. Якщо ми боїмося тиші, то втікаємо від таїнства Слова Божого. Просімо в нього тихого серця. Тиша – це не відсутність шуму, а приймання присутності. Вже на рівні людських відносин добре знаємо, що приймаємо іншого тільки тоді, коли наше серце тихе, інакше кидаємо йому в обличчя все те, що маємо на думці.

Просімо у Святого Духа тихого серця. Просімо його «молитвами Богородиці», як ми співали на початку Божественної літургії. Вона є тією тишею, всеціло наповненою Словом. Саме в цій тиші Бог навіки воплотився. Саме в тиші нашого серця, яке слухає, Він візьме на себе нашу людську природу – таку чудесну і таку трагічну – щоб відродити її.

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

Frequently we are troubled by our shortcomings and sins, which we commit in life. Then we go to confession, try to be vigilant about prayer, and go to church. However, very rarely do we bear in our hearts a desire for perfection, holiness. Even though we received this command from the Lord, himself, “Be ye perfect.” Christ doesn’t say, “It’s desirable, that you would be perfect; it wouldn’t be bad for you to be perfect, but He gives a precise instruction to be perfect. Due to our failures and lapses we become disillusioned about whether or not we can be irreproachable, but the Lord is sure that each one of us can attain perfection. Therefore these words apply to each one of us. “Be ye perfect.”

– Bishop BENEDICT

Часто нас турбує наші недоліки та гріхи, які ми здійснюємо в житті. Тоді ми йдемо до сповіді, намагаємось пильнувати про молитву і йти до церкви. Проте, дуже рідко ми маємо в наших серцях прагнення до досконалості, святості. Хоча ми отримали цю команду від Господа самого себе: «Будьте досконалі». Христос не каже: «Бажаю, щоб ви були досконалі; це було б не погано для вас, щоб бути досконалим, але Він дає точне настанову бути досконалим. Через наші невдачі ми розчаровані в тому, чи можемо ми бути бездоганними, але Господь впевнений, що кожен з нас може досягти досконалості. Тому ці слова стосуються кожного з нас. “Будьте досконалі”.

– Кир ВЕНЕДИКТ

Sunday offering for October 8

Amount	Number
\$5.00	1
\$15.00	2
\$20.00	3
\$22.00	1 (loose)
\$25.00	1
\$30.00	1
\$40.00	2
\$50.00	1
\$105.00	2
\$120.00	1
<hr/>	
\$567.00	

Parishioner Total: \$567.00

Average / parish household (43): \$7.27

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2200.00

Deficit: <\$1,633.00>

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
Michael Miller
Olga Miller
Lubomyra Yoldas



**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква
Святого Йоана Хрестителя
St. John the Baptizer
Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church**

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Website: stjohnthebaptizer.org

Pastor: Fr. James Bankston
frjames@mac.com
Fr. James' cell phone: (619) 905-5278

The Sower and the Seed

Dearly beloved, the reading from the holy gospel about the sower requires no explanation, but only a word of warning. In fact, the explanation has been given by Truth Himself, and it cannot be disputed by a frail human being. However, there is one point in our Lord's exposition which you ought to weigh well. It is this. If I told you that the seed represented the word, the field the world, the birds the demons, and the thorns riches, you would perhaps be in two minds as to whether to believe me. Therefore, the Lord himself deigned to explain what He had said.

Store up in your minds the Lord's words which you receive through your ears, for the word of the Lord is the nourishment of the mind. When His word is heard but not stored away in the memory, it is like food which has been eaten and then rejected by an upset stom-

ach. A person's life is in danger if he cannot retain his food; so if you receive the food of holy exhortations, but fail to store in your memory those words of life which nurture righteousness, you have good reason to fear the danger of everlasting death. Be careful, then, that the word you have received through your ears remains in your heart.

Remember these words: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." All who were there listening to Christ had ears of the body. But He who said to those same people: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear," was referring, beyond doubt, to the ears of the heart. See then that the discourse which you hear takes root in your heart.

St. Gregory the Great

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