

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
SIXTH SUNDAY OF LUKE



Icon of the Seven Youths of Ephesus -- October 22nd



October 22, 2017

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE HOLY AND EQUAL-TO-THE-APOSTLES ABERCIUS, BISHOP AND WONDERWORKER OF HIERAPOLIS;
THE SEVEN HOLY YOUTHS OF EPHEBUS: MAXIMILIAN, JAMBLICUS, MARTINIAN, DIONYSIUS, ANTONINUS,
EXACUSTODIAN AND JOHN

TONE 3

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR OCTOBER 23 – OCTOBER 29

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27 – OUR VENERABLE FATHER HILARION THE GREAT

10:30 AM – Divine Liturgy at **St. Paul Senior Home**, 328 Maple Street, San Diego

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28 – OUR VENERABLE FATHER HILARION THE GREAT

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

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29 – TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; THE VENERABLE MARTYR ANASTASIA THE ROMAN; OUR VENERABLE FATHER ABRAMIUS, ARCHIMANDRITE OF THE EPIPHANY MONASTERY, WONDERWORKER OF ROSTOV

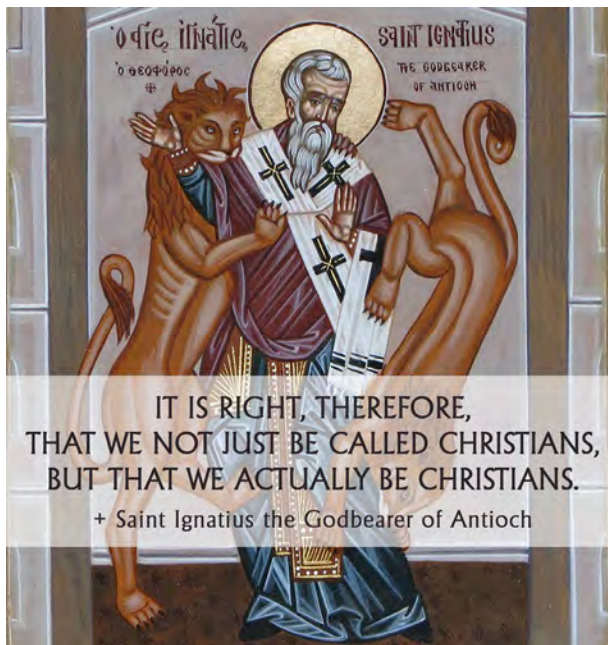
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

For All Parishioners

It is inevitable that by our life we witness or don't witness God. Even though we frequently live in a state of illusion that we can keep a neutral stand, however this is not so. Generally we always take a step on the side of God or away from God. Often we appease ourselves with the thoughts that these or other circumstances will bring us to the Lord, or we complain that some situations draw us away from Him. In reality whatever the situations are, they can either bring us closer to the Lord or pull us away from Him as well. This depends on the attitude each one of us has. Circumstances in themselves do not make us either saints or sinners.

We all know about saints. They are those beings who knew how to take advantage of all the circumstances of their life in such a way that they could live in perfection and holiness. They had those circumstances which God gave them. Humanly speaking, possibly, they were lighter than ours at times, but more often they were weightier. All of this was sent to them by God, that exactly in these circumstances they could achieve sanctity. In the same way He sent us our life as well. God sends us each person, every event, gives us work, family so that exactly there, in these concrete situations of our life, we would profess and witness our faith in Him.

– BENEDICT (Aleksiychuk)



IT IS RIGHT, THEREFORE,
THAT WE NOT JUST BE CALLED CHRISTIANS,
BUT THAT WE ACTUALLY BE CHRISTIANS.

+ Saint Ignatius the Godbearer of Antioch

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.

ДУХОВНЕ РОЗУМІННЯ...

(Притча про багача і Лазаря)

Увага - це одна із важливих чеснот духовної людини. Причому - це чеснота, котра дозволяє нам бачити діяння Божі в житті, в інших, довкола нас. Однак, щоб людина духовна змогла їх добачити, їй необхідно вийти «зі свого світу»...

Справді, проблема багатьох людей полягає в тому, що вони живуть у власному світі – світі своїх думок, планів, тощо. З одного боку це зрозуміло, адже ми заробляючи на хліб насущний, майже «зобов'язані» лише так жити, а з іншого – це ізоляція. Самоізоляція.

Про таку самоізоляцію нам й говорить притча про багача і Лазаря. Вона нам оповідає, що один із її персонажів – багач – був тим, хто мав собі на меті влаштувати життя. І, виглядає, влаштував... Однак через таке «успішне» влаштування (вдягаючись у коштовну одіж та бенкетуючи) він настільки ізолювався від реальності, настільки «увійшов в себе», що перестав помічати ближнього. Він, по суті, сотворив собі паралельний світ. Не виключно, що у своєму житті (чи радше у своїх міркуваннях), він ділив людей на певні касти: з тим варто щось мати до діла, а з тим – ні ... Так і прожив свій вік.

Притча оповідає, що після смерті багач почав потребувати зближення із Лазарем: «Отче Аврааме, змилуйся наді мною, пошли Лазаря нехай умочить у воду кінець пальця свого й прохолодить язик мій» (Лк 16,24)...

Це, виглядає, дуже показовий

приклад для нашого повсякденного життя. Адже нерідко буває, наприклад, так, що ті учні, яких колись вчителі в школі вважали нездарамі, яких «навіть нема чого на уроках щось питати, бо що воно скаже», з часом (а Бог ще й «вміє» так зробити!) стануть їм у пригоді... Отже, все міняється з часом, стає на свої місця. Справа в тім, що, потреба в іншій людині – це дуже тонка «матерія», яку неможливо виміряти наперед якимось критеріями, адже життя - це таємниця. Тому зле коли ми потребуємо особу лише за її якості, а тим паче фізичні, видимі. Таким, по суті, є ритм, і стиль мислення сучасного суспільства, котре часто цінить людину лише за щось, що вона тепер має.

Та притча оповідає, що «перспективи» багача і Лазаря після їх смерті радикально змінюються: видимий успіх чи неуспіх одного і другого перетворюються у свою протилежність. І це не дивно, адже Христова благовість має зовсім інші критерії щодо успіху, успішності. Ці поняття у християнстві асоціюються, насамперед, із поступом у духовному житті. Друга молитва вірних у Літургії Йоана Золотоустого це дуже явно підкреслює: «Даруй же Боже і тим, що моляться з нами успіх у житті і вірі і духовному розумінні». Отже, успішність життя полягає у його духовному розумінні. Воно почнеться тоді, коли в ближньому побачимо образ Божий...

о. Степан Угрин

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

by John G. Panagiotou

If you want to know the spiritual state and strength of a church, just look at its stewardship report.

What do Jesus, the Bible, and the Church Fathers say about Tithing and Giving to God?

“Where your treasure is there will your heart be also.”¹

These words of Jesus have resonated within the hearts of people for two thousand years. What was Jesus talking about? What do Jesus, the Bible, and the Church Fathers have to say about tithing and giving to God?

The Scriptures have no less than 2,350 verses having to do with money and money management. Jesus speaks about money and money management more than any other topic including heaven, hell, salvation etc. The topic is very important for the Christian life.

In an often misquoted verse, St. Paul the Apostle writes,

“the love of money is the root of all evil”.²

St. Paul teaches that our Lord realizes that we have needs to meet in order to live and to carry out His work. God is, however, a jealous God and demands our full commitment with nothing else taking precedence over His Lordship in our lives. That is why the Apostle Paul warns his first century Greek congregation that the *love* of money is evil.

All that we have is on loan from God. It is all gift. What we do with our time, talent, and treasures will have to be given account of on the last day. This was the great sin of disobedience by Adam in the Garden of Eden. He abused his gift of stewardship. King Solomon who was the richest and wisest man of all time, expressed his feeling of the emptiness of materialism apart from God when he said,

“vanity of vanities, it is all a bubble that bursts”.

In the book of Genesis, the mysterious paradigmatic priest of priests Melchizedek appears to perform one task alone: to collect the tithe from Abraham and to thus confer a blessing upon him on behalf of the Lord.³ This clearly shows that Abraham in his righteousness before God gave of his first fruits (his best fruits) unto the Lord and in turn was blessed. This is precisely what God is calling us to do. We as believers are each called upon to give sacrificially of our best resources first and God will take care of the rest as He did with Father Abraham.

As individuals, when we become burdened with a mindset of materialism (i.e. non-stewardship focused giving) we become slaves to our wealth instead of our wealth becoming our servants for the promotion of God’s Kingdom. This clearly is not the way that God intended it to be. Inevitably, we squander the gifts of our resources. Then a multitude of other problems emerge namely the bondage of debt. For truly, as the Preacher teaches in Ecclesiastes and Proverbs,

“the borrower is a slave to the lender”.⁴

All of these principles not only apply to the individual Christian, but to the life of a congregation as well. Jesus is clear in the New Testament when He says that He would build and grow the Church and that the task at hand for believers is to make disciples who are followers of Jesus amongst the nations. That is what the core culture of a parish and diocese should be all about. That is what the ultimate focus of any and all monetary collections should be about. As the late great

1 Matthew 6:21

2 1st Timothy 6:10

3 Genesis 14:18-20

4 Proverbs 22:7

Orthodox theologian Georges Florovsky would write on the matter:

The primary task of the historical Church is the proclamation of another world “to come.” The Church bears witness to the New Life, disclosed and revealed in Christ Jesus, the Lord and Saviour. This it does both by word and deed. The true proclamation of the Gospel would be precisely the practice of this New Life: to show faith by deeds (cf. Matt. 5:16). The Church is more than a company of preachers, or a teaching society, or a missionary board. It has not only to invite people, but also to introduce them into this New Life, to which it bears witness.

It is a missionary body indeed, and its mission field is the whole world. But the aim of its missionary activity is not merely to convey to people certain convictions or ideas, not even to impose on them a definite discipline or a rule of life, but first of all to introduce them into the New Reality, to convert them, to bring them through their faith and repentance to Christ Himself, that they should be born anew in Him and into Him by water and the Spirit. Thus the ministry of the Word is completed in the ministry of the Sacraments.⁵

If you want to know the spiritual state and strength of a church, just look at its stewardship report. Invariably, it tells it all because what people do with their money speaks volumes. We make disciples by giving people Jesus through preaching, teaching, the sacramental life, the liturgical life and outreach ministries. It is to this end that our giving should be focused. If the *ekklesia* will do its job, Jesus has promised to be faithful and do His. Sacrificial giving for the Christian is not an option, but a joyful obligation. St. John Chrysostom in the 4th century speaks of this joyful obligation in his book *On Wealth and Poverty* when he writes that the Christian owns nothing because God owns everything.⁶

The ecclesial ministry in its essence is not about buildings, budgets, and bodies. The model that we ought to follow is that the Church should be viewed first and foremost as the family of God, not just as another corporation or business. When that happens, the Bible tells us that inevitably God’s presence and blessing can be seen manifest in the local eucharistic community because its focus is on Jesus the Author of our salvation. It is then when we see the fullness of the Faith express itself, not only in the transformation of the elements into the Body and Blood of Christ, but when the celebrant and those worshipers present are transfigured into the Body of Christ as well.

With these things in mind, proper Christian stewardship for individuals and congregations should include the following four principles: 1) the glorification of God should be the focus; 2) giving should be sacrificial; 3) giving should be of the best of the first fruits of one’s resources; and 4) debt has no place in this paradigm.

If you would incorporate these four principles of economics into your lives and the life of your congregation, the Lord has promised to do mighty, mighty works in your life and in the lives of all around you. A proper understanding of stewardship is not a luxury in our private life as a Christian and in our collective life as the *Ekklesia*. For us to be truly “called out from the world” as the word *ekklesia* connotes, is to take up the mantle and responsibility of stewardship and all that it entails.

John G. Panagiotou is a graduate of St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary and Wheeling Jesuit University.

⁵ Florovsky, Georges, “The Church: Her Nature and Task” appeared in volume 1 of the *Universal Church in God’s Design* (S.C.M. Press, 1948).

⁶ Chrysostom, Saint John, *On Wealth and Poverty*

[trans.] (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1984).

SPORTICISM: THE TRUE AMERICAN RELIGION

I want to clarify something before I even go a single letter further as I know how passionate Americans are for their sports. As a youngster, I was a massive basketball and Bulls fan. It became a common occurrence for my family and I (sic) to rearrange events based on the Bulls schedule—a schedule that was proudly attached to the front of the refrigerator so as to be viewed and reviewed easily. And my participation within this mass-media-driven culture extended far beyond the television screen. I owned/wore various baseball caps with the Bulls logo/colors on them; slept on a bed with sheets and pillow coverings from the movie SPACE JAM (starring Michael “His Airness” Jordan); practiced dunking and shooting on a small Orlando Magic wall-mounted hoop and ball set (a Bulls version was simply impossible to find) that hung over my bed; and so on. However, no avenue of merchandising showed my dedication to the sport as prominently or magnificently than trading card collecting. Once or twice a week you could find me at the trading card shop—the one that existed on Milwaukee Ave.—either buying new packs of cards in the hopes of getting some that I desperately needed to complete a set and/or picking up the newest issue of a trading-card value magazine.

Furthermore, as someone with a weakened immune system, mostly due to limited mobility and what have you rather than a direct result of my disease itself, I often found myself in the hospital dealing with a case of pneumonia. On one such occasion, a doctor/pediatrician came to check-in on me, and the conversation quickly leaped onto sports. To make a long story short, he ended up giving me several basketball cards from his private collection despite barely knowing me. The reason I bring up such a caveat is to show that in spite of all my real troubles, I could still make the effort to (enthusiastically) discuss sports. And, yet, this idyllic world came to an abrupt and troubling end when Jordan, officially and finally, left “the sport he loved”. Although I tried sticking with the team afterwards; this was an effort in futility given the depths to which their game-playing

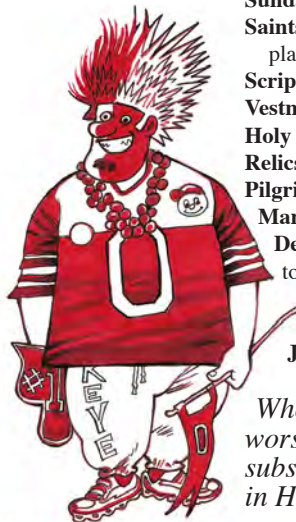
suffered. The dramatic exit of Michael, as well as the very palpable effect it had upon the team, proved to me, beyond a shadow of doubt, how illusory this world—a world I had become so thoroughly engrossed in that it rivaled the “real” world beyond—was. It didn’t matter how much I yelled at the screen, rooting for the Bulls to continue with their in-game streak; it never affected the outcome. It didn’t matter how many stats I memorized; it didn’t affect the sub-par players/coaches they chose. It didn’t matter what card set I had completed; it became considered worthless, arbitrarily, in the next month’s trade magazine for any number of reasons.

And these jaundiced set of eyes has watched in horror and disgust at the twisted marriage of “state” and “enterprise”; “commercialism” and “patriotism” that has become indicative at many mainstream sport events. However, in an effort to extend an olive-branch (of sorts) to my athletic brothers and sisters; I do understand the importance sports may play in your respective lives. I am more than well-aware that many pivotal moments in a person’s life might revolve, directly or indirectly, around sports; whether as mere spectators or active participants. But I implore you to study, momentarily but earnestly, why you associate yourself and/or your family with a sport/team. I encourage you to explore whether the sport world you

find yourself bowing in supplication to is, truly, worth your blessed time or if it could be better utilized. I ask you if that sport game is truly worth rushing out of Church service, as if your house is on fire, simply for a fleeting moment or two of joy instead of thanking Christ for the knowledge that you could go quench your thirst for base delight but instead choose Him over other enticements. As I write and review this post, I realize that, like others, I am, essentially, preaching a message of moderation. We live in such a world that likes to force us into extremes that I merely want people to find a true source of happiness rather than ones pre-packaged and sold to us with false promises and vacant smiles.

— Michael Wojciechowski

New American Religions... #1 Sporticism



Sunday Liturgy: Sunday Game
Saints & Apostles: Coaches & players

Scriptures: Team Statistics

Vestments: Team colors & gear

Holy day: Opening game day

Relics: Signed memorabilia

Pilgrimage: Super Bowl

Mardi Gras: Half-time

Devotional Statues: mascot toys & player action figures

Liturgical chant: Team anthem

Jihad: Street riots

When men stop worshipping God, they substitute something else in His place.

— G.K. Chesterton

WHAT IS A FIRST-PORITION GIVER?

A First-Portion Giver is a believer who offers a first-portion of his time, talent, and financial resources out of grateful recognition of the fact that all he has, he holds in trust from God.



TIME

A First Portion Giver offers a first portion of his *time*.

“Let us spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing. But let us encourage one another...”

Hebrews 10:24-25



TALENT

A First Portion Giver offers a first portion of his *talent*.

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.”

1 Corinthians 12:4-6



RESOURCES

A First Portion Giver offers a first portion of his *treasure*.

“Concerning the collection for the saints..., on the first day of the week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in proportion to the income God has given you...”

1 Corinthians 16:2

Sunday offering for October 15

| Amount | Number | |
|-----------------|--------|-----------|
| \$5.00 | 2 | |
| \$20.00 | 3 | (1 loose) |
| \$25.00 | 1 | |
| \$40.00 | 3 | |
| \$50.00 | 1 | |
| \$75.00 | 2 | |
| \$105.00 | 1 | |
| <u>\$520.00</u> | | |

Parishioner Total: \$520.00

Average / parish household (43): \$6.67

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2200.00

Deficit: <\$1,680.00>

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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Parish Office: (619) 697-5085

Website: stjohnthebaptizer.org

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

The Seven Holy Sleepers

Fleeing the persecution of Decius, the Roman Emperor, seven young Christian men took shelter in a cave outside of Ephesus. It was about the year AD 250. The persecutors seeing that they had refused to abandon their Christian faith and embrace pagan beliefs, ordered that the mouth of the cave be sealed with the men still inside. In the cave, the men prayed and eventually fell asleep.

In the years after the persecutions, Christianity found gradual acceptance in the Roman Empire. By the time of the Emperor Theodosius II (AD 408-450), Christianity had become the official state religion.

One day, the story goes, the landowner decided to open the cave, in order to use it as a cattle pen. He opened the cave and found the men inside still sleeping. As light streamed into the cave for the first time in nearly two hundred years, the men awoke. Confused, they at first

believed that they had been sleeping just one night. But when one of the men left the cave in search of food, he found that Christianity was no longer a persecuted religion in Ephesus. In fact, most people now shared his belief in Jesus Christ, and there were crosses openly displayed atop buildings in the town.

The townspeople, surprised by this group of young strangers who still carried coins from the ancient Decius era, told Marinus, the bishop, about them. Marinus interviewed the sleepers, and all recounted the same story of seeking refuge in the cave. Then, singing praises to God, the men died.

The legend of the Seven Sleepers has been told in many cultures, including Eastern and Western Christianity and Islam, with some small variations, and has been depicted in art throughout the centuries.

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