

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
NINTH SUNDAY OF LUKE



*Icon of the Entrance of the Mother of God into the Temple -- November 21st*



# November 19, 2017

## TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE HOLY PROPHET OBADIAH;

THE HOLY MARTYR BARLAAM OF CAESAREA IN CAPPADOCIA;

OUR VENERABLE FATHERS BARLAAM AND IOASAPH

### TONE 7

## SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR NOVEMBER 20 – NOVEMBER 26

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20

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

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21 THE ENTRANCE INTO THE TEMPLE OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS (OBLIGATORY FEAST)

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25

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

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 26 – TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST;

OUR VENERABLE FATHER ALIPIUS THE STYLITE OF ADRIANOPOLIS; DEDICATION OF THE CHURCH OF THE GREAT MARTYR GEORGE, IN KIEV, BEFORE THE GATES OF ST. SOPHIA

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

For All Parishioners



The **Entrance of the Theotokos** into the Temple, also called **The Presentation**, is one of the Great Feasts of the Eastern Church, celebrated on November 21.

According to Tradition, the Virgin Mary was taken — presented — by her parents Joachim and Anna into the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem as a young girl, where she lived and served as a Temple virgin until her betrothal to St. Joseph. One of the earliest sources of this tradition is the non-canonical *Protoevangelion of James*, also called the *Infancy Gospel of James*.

Mary was solemnly received by the temple community which was headed by the priest Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist. She was led to the holy place to become herself the "holy of holies" of God, the living sanctuary and temple of the Divine child who was to be born in her. The Church also sees this feast as a feast which marks the end of the physical temple in Jerusalem as the dwelling place of God.

– *orthodoxwiki.org*

### Mark Your Calendars

On December 17 St. Nicholas will visit our parish. Please come and greet him and enjoy the Christmas bake-sale and bazaar.

*IF ONE IS TO BE CALLED CATHOLIC, one follows what the Church teaches; that is the correct understanding of conscience (as upheld also by Vatican II). And if one really cannot follow what the Church teaches, then one's conscience requires that one leave the Church. That is the adult decision. One's conscience does not require that one makes up one's own personal religion and then pretend that it is Catholic.*

– Bishop Robert C. Morlino

Open to me the doors of repentance, O Giver of Life; for my soul rises early to pray toward Your holy Temple, bearing the temple of my body all defiled. But in Your compassion, purify me by the lovingkindness of Your mercy.



# Багатіти в Бога

Лука 12, 16 – 21

Продовжуючи тему, порушену в притчі про багача і Лазаря, Ісус знову говорить нам про свій прихід. Пригадує, що цей час близький. «Цієї ж ночі душу твою заберуть у тебе» (Лк. 12, 20), – каже Бог до багача. Якщо ми пам'ятатимемо про це, то сприйматимемо життя, «дивлячись на Бога», зможемо бачити дійсність в її реальному вимірі.

Ісус показує, наскільки нетривким є те, на що ми спираємося, тобто те, що ми маємо. Це стосується всіх аспектів нашого життя, від найменших необхідних нам речей (навіть, якщо не збираємо багатств), до тих численних Божих дарів, таких як здоров'я, що творять нашу особу.

Водночас ця притча показує, яким ми є неоціненим скарбом. Тут вже йдеться не про володіння чимось, а про буття. І коли світло Господа, завдяки якому ми є, освітлює наше життя, можемо розпізнати, що ми насправді маємо. Про яку б ділянку нашого життя не йшлося, все, що маємо, є дарами Божими, навіть, якщо те чи інше благо ми здобули власною працею, зусиллям чи, може, навіть широтою свого духу. Услід за Ісусом апостол Павло нагадує нам, що отримуємо життя не власними зусиллями: «Бо ви спасенні благодаттю через віру. І це не від нас: воно дар Божий» (Еф. 2, 8).

Вартісність нашої особи не залежить від рівня того, що маємо. Тому ми не мали б поводитися, як власники стосовно того, ким ми є. Застановімося над нашим ставленням до себе самих, над тим, що висока думка про себе чи незадоволення собою – це протилежні вияви тої самої постави! Подумаймо також про те, що інші думають про нас. Та проте, роздумуючи про своє життя, мусимо наново відкрити самих себе як чудовий дар, даний нам. Мусимо прийняти себе з рук Отця. Все, з чого складається наше єство, дав нам Він.

Той, хто дарує нам нас, – наш Бог – нічого не має. Він «той, хто є» (Вих. 3, 14). І це не метафізика. Це нам виявляє Ісус. Згадаймо Його дивовижні слова: «Коли вгору Чоловічого Сина піднесете,

тоді визнаєте, що Сущий я» (Йо. 8, 28). У слові «сущий» міститься незвідане Боже ім'я. І Він, наш Бог, образ Отця, являється нам як любов, дану в жертву, у повному самозреченні. То ж нам слід поводитися не так, наче ми власники самих себе, а як улюблені діти, хоронителі тайни Божої любови.

І під таким кутом зору розкривається весь сенс останнього речення сьогоднішнього Євангелія – не збирати для себе, а багатіти в Бога (див. Лк. 12, 21). Треба, щоб наші дари приносили плоди «в Бога». «Бо ми Його створіння, створені в Христі Ісусі» (Еф. 2, 10). Мусимо співпрацювати з Богом у Його діянні як творця, стаючи по-Божому людьми і допомагаючи іншим ставати такими. Власне цього Він очікує від нас, і тоді ми будемо вірними хоронителями Його скарбів.

Ми «дивимося на Бога» (пор. 2 Кор. 4, 18), коли наше серце споглядає Христа Ісуса розп'ятого і воскреслого. Нехай наше серце промовляє: «Хто я є, Господи? Сам по собі я нічого не означаю. Все моє – від Тебе і належить Тобі». Якщо ми утвердимось в цьому, Святий Дух дасть нам стати вільними, не покладатися більше на свої ненадійні блага та нестійкі опори. Ми зможемо сказати: «Моя радість – це Ти», а ми добре знаємо, що коли почуваємося безпечно, це часто виражаємо радістю. Щасливі події – це добре, але вони нетривкі. А тому «моя радість – у Господі». (пор. Неем. 8, 10; Пс. 31, 11; Іс. 29, 19; Флп. 4, 4)

То ж просімо, щоб ми були убогими, як Він. Тоді наше серце буде здатним почути вже тепер, як Він «просить назад» нашу душу. Він просить, не відбирає, а просить дати те, що дарував нам, аби ми, врешті, розквітли в Ньому. Ми справді стаємо собою тоді, коли Він цілковито бере нас у свої руки. Він нічого не має, Його любов – безкоштовна, і ми не можемо спиратися на те, що маємо, а лише на того, хто любить нас.

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

## **Inside America's Largest Religious Revival You Know Nothing About**

*For decades, demographic studies have indicated the steady decline of religion in America, but new measures suggest at least one religion in America is alive and well.*

*By Heather Smith*

November 10, 2017

For decades, demographic studies have indicated the steady decline of religion in America, but new measures suggest that, on the contrary, at least one religion in America is alive and well, thriving in every community, and claiming devoted adherents in nearly every household.

This new religious revival has remained under the radar in large part because its adherents do not claim any religious attachment to this social institution, but by every measure of behaviors typically associated with religion, it is deceitful to label it as anything less. Although it shies away from adopting an overarching organization or name for itself, for the purposes of this study, it will be considered under the name Athletica.

What must first impress outsiders studying the life of Athletica is how wholehearted is the devotion of its followers. These disciples are willing to sacrifice almost limitlessly where their dedication to this faith is concerned. Money, time, health, and even family may all be expended for the sake of bettering oneself within Athletica, and it is no exaggeration to say its members orient their lives around the strictures of their religion's demands.

### **Forget One Service For Week. We Have Daily Meetings**

Whereas in traditional American Christianity followers would regularly meet together once or twice a week (a timetable most now find unduly onerous), members of Athletica gather four, five, six, or even seven days a week. Despite the significant time demands, the families of adherents dutifully and unflinchingly keep these meeting commitments and accept as normal the stringent penalties imparted to those who miss a gathering — penalties usually enacted by limiting the devotee's rights of participation in important group ceremonies.

Nor are the youngest members of Athletica uninitiated in their family's devotion. Athletica parents regularly begin teaching their children its basic skills as soon as they are able to toddle, and some begin their benevolent indoctrination well before that by dressing their infants in tiny versions of the liturgical vestments. By age four or five, their parents have already catechized most of these youngsters in the basic tenets of Athletica, though this pious education will continue to deepen through daily family conversations, oral and written retellings of important historical moments in Athletica, and inclusion in the essential Athletica ceremonies.

Eager young zealots of elementary age and upward often relish memorizing not only the many Athletica rules, but also masses of historical information about specific persons and events. Although it is hard to believe such memorization would be undertaken voluntarily, there is no trace of a "drill and kill" mentality about this phenomenon. These youngsters apparently love this imparted faith enough that they simply cannot help trying to absorb everything about it that they can, and they especially find pleasure in learning of the great heroes of Athletica's past, whom they inevitably long to emulate.

### **Start 'Em Young for Optimal Results**

One reason for the brilliant success of Athletica in handing down its tenets from generation to generation is the belief that children should be initiated into the fullness of its ways as soon as possible. Unlike most Christian denominations, which have opted for segregating children's participation into minimal, appealing, but generally insubstantial segments of the community's life together, Athletica differentiates for its young catechumens only insofar as is necessary.

It will, for instance, provide child-sized items when physical stature would otherwise prevent participation, but in most ways teaches children through full involvement. The astonishing result of interacting with its children through the sometimes daunting vocabulary and directives of the adult adherents is that these youngest disciples prove all the more eager to learn the tenets of Athletica and to mature into full membership.

Around the time of elementary or middle school age, children deemed physically and mentally ready begin to adopt the ascetic lifestyle of Athletica. Depending upon the particular denominational strain, parents will insist either that children rise well before sunup to practice for several hours in Athletica training or that such practice be dutifully performed immediately after school. Some adherents do both.

Late evening hours and weekends are reserved for the equivalent of local and regional worship services, at which Athletica adherents gather corporately, following intricate and time-honored liturgies that can often appear as a tangle of somewhat arbitrary rules to the uninitiate, but which perceptibly rouse Athletica followers into heights of emotional experience.

### **So Dedicated, This Religion Affects Food and Sleep**

In the more devout Athletica households, diet and other bodily disciplines are also part of the ascetic training. Certain foods are eaten or avoided in an effort to maximize fitness for advancement in the ranks of Athletica, and dietary supplements supposed to enhance the devotee's mind or body are sometimes procured at great cost.

Those most dedicated to this life will carefully regulate their sleep to ensure supreme attunement and awareness in the practice of Athletica. Attaining sufficient sleep in the midst of such a demanding schedule can be difficult, but most adherents find that short nights due to Athletica

events can be compensated for by using times formerly set aside for other religious activities (e.g. Sunday mornings) to gain extra hours of sleep.

Of course, not every child demonstrates the natural ability to progress to the highest levels of Athletica. However, as in churches of yore, there is room in this religion not only for those who will carry out the priestly duties but also for devoted laity. While tens of thousands participate actively in the life of Athletica at the local level, hundreds of thousands participate in less all-consuming fashion at the national level, transferring hope for their own advancement into hope for vicarious vindication through the advancement of others.

Long before more traditional religious groups thought of using media as a means for finding and retaining converts, Athletica had a well-established presence in radio, television, and internet. Its devotees are therefore long-accustomed to setting aside Sabbath times when Athletica events will be broadcast and to treating these devotional times as sacred. Despite the physical disconnectedness of these media-based believers, such Athletica followers display an astonishing level of knowledge, fervor, and devotion. The younger members of such "observer" Athletica families sometimes even surpass their "participant" peers in sheer memorization of knowledge.

Across all branches of Athletica, there is a high regard for proper liturgical vestments. Those who serve the equivalent of priestly roles wear elaborate outfits permeated with history and significance. In part, such garments functionally allow participants in the various Athletica denominations to carry out their assigned duties, but it is obvious to even the most casual observer that here is a religious body for whom colors, symbols, and numbers are deeply meaningful.

This is clearly reflected in the eagerness of the laity to clothe themselves fittingly for their observance of Athletica rituals. Far from the prevailing Christian drift toward an "anything

goes” mentality of dress for religious occasions, Athletica followers put surprising amounts of care and expense into the clothes they wear, even when participating in their own homes via televised events.

### **The Dark Side of This Popular Religion**

This popular religion does have a dark side. Alarming, it is not uncommon for those striving to advance through the ranks of Athletica to suffer chronic pain or serious injury from their devout exertions. However, it is a tribute to the depth of conviction Athletica elicits in most of its followers that this does not deter them from persisting in their daily routines. Almost universally, the response to such suffering is that it is simply part of the affliction that must be borne in the Athletica life, and that they endure such pain because of the glory for which they hope.

Underlying all these devoted practices is the recurring theme that for its faithful, Athletica is more than a religion to attend to for a couple hours per week.

For, like every religion, Athletica does offer its devotees a form of hope. In comparison to more traditional religions that typically offer extravagant rewards (e.g., life after death, forgiveness of terrible sins) to virtually any willing convert, Athletica is a more stringent and elitist sect. Its promise is of financial gain and personal glory, but only for the most elect.

Of the tens of thousands who hope for financial reward through Athletica, only 2 percent will be granted their desire. Of those who work to earn a spot in the highest ranks of the Athletica hierarchy, hardly more than one out of a thousand will find their hope fulfilled. Interestingly, though, Athletica adherents commonly convince themselves that they (or more often, their children) will be among the favored few, despite statistical data to the contrary, and many who hope for the financial gain accompanying such advancement fail to recognize the more significant financial outlays they have unquestioningly offered up on its proverbial altars.

Underlying all these devoted practices is the recurring theme that for its faithful, Athletica is more than a religion to attend to for a couple hours per week. It is a complete lifestyle and way of thinking. A rudimentary calculation reveals that Athletica devotees typically spend anywhere from five to ten times as many hours dedicating themselves to religious learning and activity as the typical weekly church-goer. Whereas Christians now tend to compartmentalize their religious and non-religious activity, Athletica adherents purposefully infuse their beliefs into every aspect of their lives, from finances to scheduling to family entertainment.

Unquestionably, the ongoing success of Athletica is rooted in its centrality to the lives of its devotees. **As Christianity fades in the West, dying from a desire to be like everything else except itself,** Athletica has risen to the ascendance as the self-assured, pervasive cultural influence. Where the Judeo-Christian world has laid down its mantle, Athletica has picked it up, unwittingly following the directives of the Hebrew Bible to teach tenets of the faith to their children, “Talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”

This depth of enculturation is most certainly the key to the trenchant, growing success of Athletica, which—by all reasonable evidence—has already replaced its rival religions in most American homes.

*Heather Smith is an advocate of classical Lutheran education and holds a BA in Elementary Education and an MA in English. Her writing may also be found at [www.sisterdaughtermotherwife.com](http://www.sisterdaughtermotherwife.com).*

## We are Called to Bear Fruit

At the Last Supper, as we read in Chapter 15 of the Gospel of John, Jesus instructed His disciples, “I Am the Vine; you are the branches.” He was telling us that the purpose of our abiding in Him is that we may bear fruit for God in the world. “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit...” (John 15:8). Just as the vine bears fruit only through its branches, so Jesus has chosen to work in the world through us. We are the members of His body – the branches through which the Vine must bear fruit. We bear fruit when we serve and support God and His Church.

## What is Christian Stewardship?

*Christian Stewardship is...*

- learning how to be a responsible and concerned caretaker of Christ’s Church; it is learning how to enjoy Church life and be happy in Church work., for in Her dwells the fullness of the Spirit of God.
- our active commitment to use all our time, talent and treasure for the benefit of humankind in grateful acknowledgment of Christ’s redeeming love.
- caring for the needs of others.
- offering one’s self to God as He offered Himself to us.
- what a person does after saying “I believe...”, as proof of that belief.
- devotion and service to God and His Church as persons, as families, as eparchy, as Church within a nation, and as Church universal.

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST’S ADVENT IN THE FLESH?

Saint Symeon Metaphrastic

*It is the restoration of human nature in Him, for He restored to human nature the dignity of Adam, and, in addition, bestowed on it the unutterable grace of the heavenly inheritance of the Holy Spirit. Leading it out of the prison of darkness, He showed it the way and the door to life. By going this way and knocking on this door, we can enter the Kingdom of Heaven. As He said, “Ask and it will be given to you... knock and it will be opened to you” (Matt. 7:7). By passing through this door, it is possible for everyone to attain the freedom of his soul, to cut off his evil thoughts, and to become Christ’s bride and consort through the communion of the Holy Spirit. Such is the inexpressible love of the Lord towards man, whom He created in His own image.*



## Sunday offering for November 12

Amount	Number
\$5.00	1
\$20.00	2
\$23.00	1 (loose)
\$25.00	2
\$40.00	2
\$105.00	1
\$200.00	1
<hr/>	
\$503.00	

Parishioner Total: \$503.00

Average / parish household (43): \$6.45  
Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2200.00

**Deficit: <\$1,697.00>**

**Net Proceeds from Rummage Sale: \$580.00**





**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](http://stjohnthebaptizer.org)

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

***Give Thanks to the Lord***

We, all of us, ought always to give thanks to God for both the universal and the particular gifts of soul and body that He bestows on us. The universal gifts consist of the four elements and all that comes into being through them, as well as all the marvelous works of God mentioned in the Divine Scriptures. The particular gifts consist of all that God has given to each individual. These include wealth, so that one can perform acts of charity; poverty, so that one can endure it with patience and gratitude; authority, so that one can exercise right judgment and establish virtue; obedience and service, so that one can more readily attain salvation of soul; health, so that one can assist those in need and undertake work worthy of God; sickness, so that one may earn the crown of patience; spiritual knowledge

and strength, so that one may acquire virtue; weakness and ignorance, so that, turning one's back on worldly things, one may be under obedience in stillness and humility; unsought loss of goods and possessions, so that one may deliberately seek to be saved and may be helped when incapable of shedding all one's possessions or even of giving alms; ease and prosperity, so that one may voluntarily struggle and suffer to attain the virtues and thus become dispassionate and fit to save other souls; trials and hardship so that those who cannot eradicate their own will may be saved in spite of themselves, and those capable of joyful endurance may attain perfection.

*St. Peter of Damascus*

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