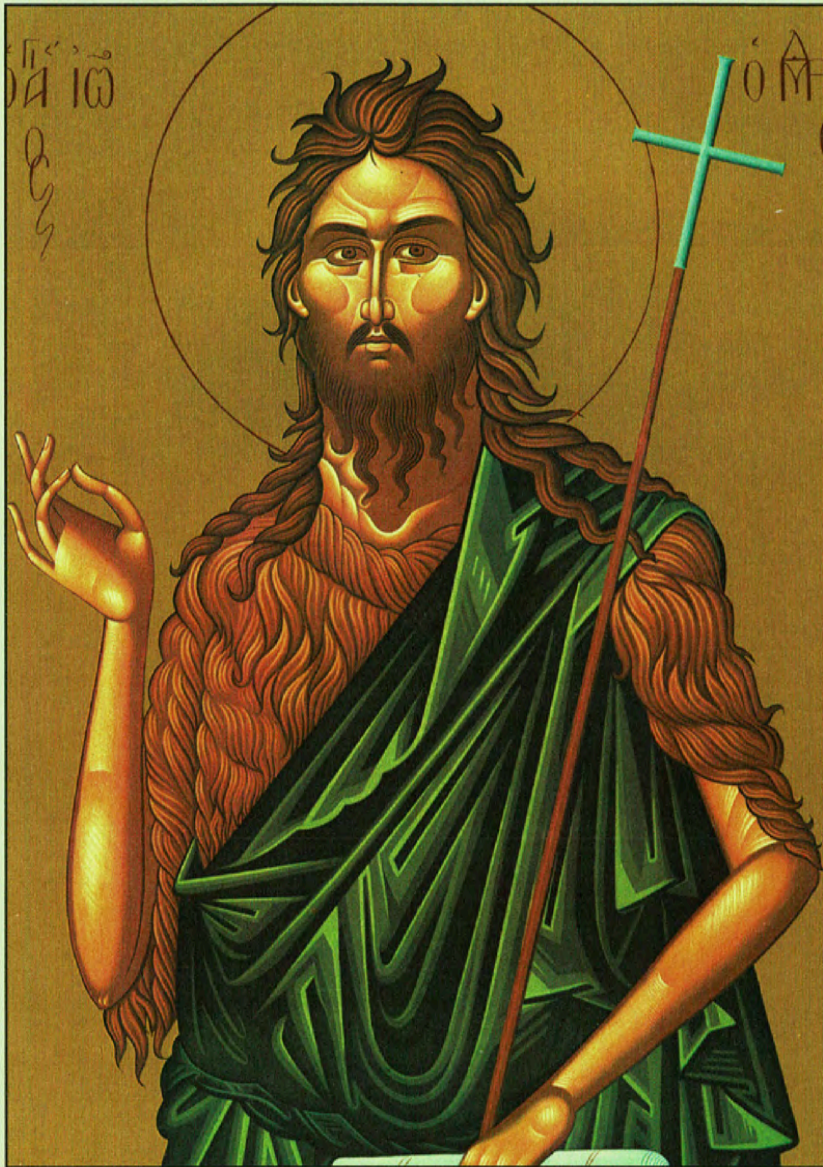


SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY (EPIPHANY)
SYNAXIS OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST



Icon of Saint John the Baptist



January 7, 2018

SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY

SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY AND GLORIOUS PROPHET, FORERUNNER AND BAPTIZER JOHN

TONE 6

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR JANUARY 1 – JANUARY 7

SATURDAY, JANUARY 13 – THE HOLY MARTYRS HERMYLUS AND STRATONICUS

6:30 PM – Great Vespers (satisfies Sunday obligation)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 14 – LEAVETAKING OF THEOPHANY; 32ND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; THE VENERABLE MARTYRS SLAIN AT SINAI AND RAITHO; THE PASSING OF THE HOLY EQUAL-TO-THE-APOSTLES NINA, ENLIGHTENER OF GEORGIA

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners



LET'S GO CAROLING!

BETWEEN DECEMBER 25 AND FEBRUARY 2 LET'S VISIT PARISHIONERS, SHUT-INS, AND NURSING HOMES TO BRING CHRISTMAS CHEER. PLEASE CONTACT FR. JAMES IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING, WOULD LIKE TO BE VISITED OR KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO BE VISITED.

Вічна Пам'ять – Eternal Memory

Our beloved parishioner, Regina Wagner, fell asleep in the Lord this past Wednesday. Funeral arrangements are pending. Please keep Regina and her whole family in your prayers.



January Birthdays:

Nicholas Hirniak	–	1/7
Michael Miller	–	1/15
Mark Hartman	–	1/23
Ephrem Tooma	–	1/24
Iryna Khanyk	–	1/24
Christian Hartman	–	1/26
Colin Hartman	–	1/26
Xenia Moore	–	1/26

*Многая і благая літа!
Many blessed years!*

Special birthday wishes to Michael Miller who is celebrating his 80th birthday this month! May God grant him health, salvation, visitation of the Holy Spirit and many blessed years!

House Blessings

It is our custom to have our homes blessed with the holy water sanctified on Theophany (the feast which commemorates the Baptism of the Lord in the Jordan River). If you would like your home blessed please let Fr. James know. If you have any questions about house blessings, what is involved, why we bless our homes, etc., please speak with Fr. James.

Неділя після Богоявлення

Народ, який сидів у темноті, побачив велике світло
Матей 4, 12 – 17

У сьогоднішньому Євангелії, говорячи «покайтеся» (Мт. 4, 17), Ісус звертається до нас. Коли ми в Нього охрестилися, то одягнулися в Нього, «зодягнулися у світло» (див. Гал. 3, 27), як ми співали сьогодні на Божественній літургії. Як же не замислитися щиро про те, що в нас перебуває Ісус і Його світло, разом з Отцем, Який є джерелом світла та Його Духом істини, що світить для нас. Саме завдяки Божій присутності в нас ми стаємо новою людиною, віднаходимо ту вічну сутність, закладену в нас від початку. То ж Ісус запитує нас: «Чому ж ви продовжуєте жити назовні, у сутінках, в нерішучості, у ваганні, у поверховому безрадісному житті? Покайтеся, визнайте, що не маєте рації, наверніться!».

Найперше, що слід зробити для навернення, – це увійти, глибоко зануритися до свого серця та охреститися в світлі Христовому, тобто в присутності Ісуса всередині нас. Ми добре знаємо, але чомусь забуваємо, коли йдеться про Нього, що коли хтось перебуває в сутінках, він немов відсутній, тоді як на світлі присутність добре видно. Але світло – це тиша, і тому нам страшно увиходити в себе. Наше «я» таке шумне і розбурхане, що мовчати йому нестерпно. Постановімо найперше увійти до свого серця, занурмося у світлу присутність Христа в ньому. Ми стаємо присутніми водночас перед ним і перед самими собою.

У пошуках Його світла ми зможемо слухати Його. Це звучить парадоксально, але для того, щоб навернутися до світла Христового, треба спочатку слухати Його, слухати Його слово. Коли хтось кличе нас, ми звертаємо до нього свій погляд. Ісус, Слово Отця, є світлом, як говорить нам про це Йоан Богослов у пролозі (див. Йо. 1, 4; 9). Він є світлом, бо Він – слово Отця. Нам треба подивитися на того, хто говорить до нас, звернути очі нашого серця до Його обличчя, адже Він перебуває в нас. Мусимо розплющити очі, бо, слухаючи, ми починаємо уважно дивитися. Слухання серцем наповнить нас світлом, у тиші все повернеться до справжнього, набере

свого сенсу. Саме через такий погляд, через таке слухання Святий Дух зійшов і перебуває на Ісусі в Його хрещенні, і так само сходить на нас у нашому хрещенні. Він перебуває в нас безперестанно, аби провадити нас, робити нас уважними до Ісуса, до ближніх. Таке навернення ми можемо переживати у будь-який момент дня.

До чого нас це провадить? Ісус сказав до нас у сьогоднішньому Євангелії: «Покайтеся, бо Небесне Царство близько» (Мт. 4, 17). Як розуміти «Небесне Царство»? Йдеться про цілком нове ставлення до інших, про людяність, наповнену Божою присутністю. А бути насправду поряд з Ним ми можемо саме через навернення серця до світла. Між нами й іншими завжди є тінь нашого «я»! Святий Дух може випростати, просвітити нашу оцінку інших людей, адже наші судження такі заплутані, вони йдуть услід за нашими емоціями, інтересами, потребою самозахисту чи ще за чимось. А проте у хрещенні отримуємо прозорливість! Мусимо навчитися від Духа істини цінувати, оцінювати маленькі щоденні події, а не лише події значні, в яких ми і так нічого не змінимо. Треба просити у Святого Духа «духовного відновлення нашого ума», як пише апостол Павло у своєму посланні (див. Еф. 4, 23).

Коли ми перебуваємо перед іншими у світлі, наше серце відкривається, і ми можемо ходити в світлі, як каже Йоан Богослов, а «коли ходимо у світлі, як Він сам – у світлі, ми маємо спільність один з одним» (1 Йо. 1, 7). Це і є Царство Боже. Єднання Бога у Пресвятій Тройці стає нашим єднанням. І тому Царство Боже зовсім близько. Воно дароване нам. Нехай світло, яке перебуває в нас, струменить із глибини наших сердець. Так, Бог є світло, бо Він – любов (див. 1 Йо 4, 16). То ж напевнімося до Його світла, і Його любов буде нашим життям.

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

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

by John G. Panagiotou

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 Russian 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

1 Matthew 6:21

2 1st Timothy 6:10

3 Genesis 14:18-20

4 Proverbs 22:7

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).



FROM THE CATHECHISM “CHRIST OUR PASCHA”

Environment in which Faith is Transmitted: Family, Nation, and Church

70 The Church, one and at the same time diverse, is a prefigurement of the family of nations, who are all equal and yet different. To all nations the Church proclaims the way of salvation: “And undoubtedly the preaching of the Church is true and steadfast, in which one and the same way of salvation is shown throughout the world.”¹ In her ministry for the salvation of all nations, the Church draws her strength from the contemplation of the Most Holy Trinity, the divine community of the Persons of the one God. She extends the invitation:

Come, O you peoples, let us worship the Godhead of three Persons ... Holy God, who created all things through the Son, with the cooperation of the Holy Spirit. Holy and Mighty, through whom we have known the Father, and through whom the Holy Spirit came into the world. Holy and Immortal, Comforting Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and rests in the Son. O Holy Trinity, glory be to you!²

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- 1 IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, V, 20, 1: PG 7, 1177.
2 *Floral Triodion*, Pentecost, Vespers, Final Sticheron at Psalm 140.

Роздуми від Владики Венедикта

На своїй життєвій дорозі ми зустрічаємо багато неординарних особистостей, визначних, часто досить побожних, а то й святих людей. Часто зустрічаємо людей, які мають колосальний вплив на наше духовне життя, на наше навернення. Нерідко ми дуже захоплюємось цими сильними особами, вважаємо їх для нас важливими і цінними. І це є нормально, бо людина шукає зразків для наслідування і авторитетів.

Однак у всіх обставинах і особах важливо бачити, що їх послав Господь, і ніщо і ніхто не є випадковістю у нашому житті. Будь-які особи самі по собі не є ні досконалі, ні святі. Вони були і є лише тими хто дозволили Богові діяти в собі, прийняли Його дар життя в святості. І вони стали великими людьми, тому що Бог великий, і Він залишив відбиток Своєї величч в тих людях. Тож побачмо за кожною особою присутність Божу.

ВІД КАТЕХИЗМУ “ХРИСТОС НАША ПАСХА”

Середовища передавання віри: сім'я, народ, церковна спільнота

70 Церква, єдина й водночас багатоманітна, є прообразом сім'ї народів, рівних і різних. Їм усім Церква проповідує шлях спасіння: «Проповідкування Церкви вірогідне і тривке, бо через неї пролягає одна дорога спасіння по всій землі»¹. Церква у служінні спасінню народів черпає наснагу із споглядання Пресвятої Тройці – Божественної спільноти Осіб єдиного Бога. Вона ж запрошує:

«Прийдіть, народи світу, поклонітесь Богові в трьох Особах [...]: Святий Боже, що все твориш Сином, за співдіянням Святого Духа! Святий Кріпкий, що нам Отця об'явив і у світ послав Святого Духа! Святий Безсмертний і Душе-Утішителю, що від Отця ісходиш і в Сині перебуваєш: Тройце Свята, – слава Тобі!»².

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- 1 ІРИНЕЙ ЛЮОНСЬКИЙ, *Проти ересей*, V, 20, 1.
2 *Квітна тріодь*, Неділя П'ятдесятниці, Вечірня, стихири на «Господи, взиваю я».

A Reflection from Bishop BENEDICT

On the road of life, we meet many extraordinary persons: distinguished, often very devout, and even holy people. Often we meet people who have a tremendous influence on our spiritual life, on our conversion. Often, we very much admire these strong people, we consider them important and valuable for us. And this is normal, because a person is looking for patterns for imitation and authority.

However, in all circumstances and persons it is important to see why the Lord sent them, and nothing and nobody is an accident in our lives. Any person in and of themselves is neither perfect nor sacred. They were and are only those who allowed God to act in themselves, accepted His gift of life in holiness. And they became great people, because God is great, and He left His imprint of His greatness in those people. So see in each person the presence of God.

Sunday offering for December 31

Amount	Number	
\$5.00	2	
\$20.00	3	(1 guest)
\$30.00	1	
\$31.00	1	(loose)
\$40.00	2	
\$50.00	1	
<u>\$100.00</u>	<u>1</u>	
\$361.00		

Parishioner Total: \$341.00

Visitor Total: \$20.00

Average / parish household (43): \$4.37

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2200.00

Deficit: <\$1859.00>



Mission Days Prayer

O Lord, God, shine forth the light of Your Holy Gospel, so that the Christian faith might spread through us, the baptized, as children of the Light. Let us be witnesses to Your Living Presence in our lives and in our parish community, O Lord, hear us and have mercy. The Holy Spirit provides everything: He sends the prophets, leads priests to perfection, teaches wisdom to the uneducated, makes theologians of fishermen, and unites the entire Christian community, O Comforter, Consubstantial with the Father and Son, glory be to You!

Upcoming Events:

- JANUARY 21** – SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE
- JANUARY 28** – SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON
- FEBRUARY 4** – SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT (MEATFARE)
- FEBRUARY 11** – SUNDAY OF THE EXPULSION FROM PARADISE (CHEESEFARE)
CHEESY POTLUCK
FORGIVENESS VESPERS
- FEBRUARY 12** – FIRST DAY OF THE GREAT FAST (LENT)

Offerings to the Church:

- Your offerings: 1) help the Church fulfill her work; 2) help you grow in Christ. Offerings are a matter of faith not just finances.
- The Lord says: “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21,) teaching us: 1) that what we spend our money on indicates what is important to us, and 2) offering our money to the Lord and the poor can help us change our hearts.

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 Voice is John, the Word is Christ

John is the voice, but the Lord is the Word who was in the beginning. John is the voice that lasts for a time; from the beginning Christ is the Word who lives forever.

Do you need proof that the voice passes away but the divine Word remains? Where is John's baptism today? It served its purpose, and it went away. Now it is Christ's baptism that we celebrate. It is in Christ that we all believe; we hope for salvation in Him. This is the message the voice cried out.

Because it is hard to distinguish word from voice, even John himself was thought to be the Christ. The voice was thought to be the word. But the voice acknowledged what it was, anxious not to give offense to the word. I am not the Christ, he said, nor Elijah, nor the prophet. And the question came: Who are you, then? He replied: I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way for the Lord.

The voice of one crying in the wilderness is the voice of one breaking the silence. Prepare the way

for the Lord, he says, as though he were saying: "I speak out in order to lead him into your hearts, but he does not choose to come where I lead him unless you prepare the way for him."

To prepare the way means to pray well; it means thinking humbly of oneself. We should take our lesson from John the Baptist. He is thought to be the Christ; he declares he is not what they think. He does not take advantage of their mistake to further his own glory.

If he had said, "I am the Christ," you can imagine how readily he would have been believed, since they believed he was the Christ even before he spoke. But he did not say it; he acknowledged what he was. He pointed out clearly who he was; he humbled himself.

He saw where his salvation lay. He understood that he was a lamp, and his fear was that it might be blown out by the wind of pride.

St. Augustine of Hippo

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