

NATIVITY OF THE FORERUNNER JOHN THE BAPTIST



Icon of the Nativity of John the Baptist -- June 24



June 24, 2018

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

NATIVITY OF THE GLORIOUS PROPHET, FORERUNNER AND BAPTIZER, JOHN

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR JUNE 25 – JULY 1

FRIDAY, JUNE 29	– THE HOLY, GLORIOUS, ALL-PRAISEWORTHY AND PREEMINENT APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL
9:30 AM	– Divine Liturgy Special Intention
SATURDAY, JUNE 30	
6:30 PM	– Great Vespers (satisfies Sunday obligation)
SUNDAY, JULY 1	– SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
	<i>THE HOLY WONDERWORKERS AND UNMERCENARIES COSMAS AND DAMIAN</i>
9:30 AM	– Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners

PLEASE NOTE: The rummage sale is being postponed. Items are still being accepted for a future date.

Relocation Meeting

Our next meeting regarding the relocation of our church will take place after the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, July 8. Please plan to attend

TEMPORARY CHURCH HOME

During the period between vacating our current location and moving into the new church in Santee we need a location to worship. Thanks to Volodymyr Bachynsky's efforts we have entered into an agreement with St. Augustine Monastery at 3266 Nutmeg Street in San Diego. We will have use of their beautiful chapel for liturgical services on Sundays and most Holy Days. *Слава Богу!* Glory to God! Let us remember the Augustinian community in our prayers - thanking God for their generosity towards our community. We also are thankful for the support in this endeavor from Bishop Robert McElroy, bishop of the Roman Catholic diocese of San Diego. We expect to begin worshiping at St. Augustine's mid to late October.

Please Note:

When you are away, please don't forget that the church still relies on your contributions. Our bills do not go on vacation. Your absence on any Sunday does not negate your obligation to support your home parish.

**THE FEAST OF THE
APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL**

"Today a joyous feast has beamed forth to all nations: the most precious memory of the most wise and major Apostles Peter and Paul." (Stichera at the Aposticha of the Vespers service of the Feast)

We owe to the Holy Apostles the priceless treasure of the Christian faith. They handed Christ's teachings down to us. From them, we received the Holy Gospel and the letter of the Apostles. They laid a firm foundation for the Church of Christ.

The servant of God Metropolitan Andrew Sheptytsky speaks beautifully of the significance that the holy Apostles have for us; he says: "The Apostles in the full sense of the word are our parents in the holy faith. Through their hands, God gave to mankind and to every nation within Christ's Church all that belongs to the divine apostolic tradition. In our ascetical life and our sermons we must not forget, therefore, that we have received everything from their hands. All that we have, we owe to their apostolic labors and their prayers... St. Paul, the Apostle, claims first place for in his letters he has given to the Church a rich revelation of God, and a wealth of divine teachings... The Liturgical Year gives the Apostle Peter first place, assigning him two days in the year, namely, January 16th - the feast of Veneration of the Chains of St. Peter and June 29th." (*On Venerations of Saints*, 1941)

On the 29th of June our Eastern Church celebrates with great solemnity the feast, which in our liturgical books is called: "The Holy, Glorious, All-Praiseworthy and Preeminent Apostles Peter and Paul." Both Apostles are distinguished for their character, their zealous apostolic labors and their great cult in holy Church.

THE EROTIC LANGUAGE OF PRAYER

May 4, 2018 · Fr. Stephen Freeman

The very heart of true prayer is desire, love. In the language of the Fathers this desire is called eros. Modern usage has corrupted the meaning of “erotic” to only mean sexual desire – but it is a profound word, without substitute in the language of the Church.

I offer a quote from Dr. Timothy Patitsas of Holy Cross in Brookline:

By eros we mean the love that makes us forget ourselves entirely and run towards the other without any regard for ourselves. Allan Bloom described eros as “love’s mad self-forgetting.” (from *Road to Emmaus*, Vol. XV, No. 2, Spring, 2014).

Patitsas, in the same interview, offers this observation on St. Maximus’ thought:

St. Maximus says that God was so good that His goodness could not be contained within Himself. It poured forth “outside” Himself in a cosmic Theophany over against the face of darkness [nothingness]. The appearing of this ultimate Beauty caused non-being itself to forget itself, to renounce itself, to leave behind its own “self” – non-being – and come to be. All of creation is thus marked by this eros, this movement of doxology, liturgy, love, and repentance out of chaos and into the light of existence. Creation is repenting from its first moment, for repentance does not require the prerequisite of sin. It simply means to put our attention still more deeply upon Christ to love Him much, much more than we have before. Of course, compared to that “more deeply,” the prior state looks like sin – but this is partly relative for us.

This is a profound summary of the work of creation, particularly in its use of Maximus’ imagery and thought. But this account of creation, almost scandalous in its “erotic” content, goes to the heart of worship, prayer and repentance. The language of prayer in Orthodoxy is frequently deeply “penitential” and filled with extreme expressions. We describe ourselves as the “worst of sinners,” etc. St. Basil’s language is typical:

Although I have completely subjected myself to sin and am unworthy of heaven, of earth and of this passing life, even though I am a slave to delights and have disgraced Your image, yet I still do not lose hope in salvation, wretched as I am, for You

have made and fashioned me. I place my hope in Your boundless mercy and approach You...

We pray with such extreme language, reflecting not a vision of legal condemnation: rather, it is the recognition of Beauty itself, in Whose Presence we appear broken, soiled, with nothing to recommend us. It is the language of repentance – but not of morbid self-hatred. It is the language of self-forgetting of leaving the self behind, of finding nothing within the self to cling to.

There is another word for this self-forgetting: *ecstasy*. Again, this word has been abused in modern language and now means an extreme emotional state. But its Greek root means to “stand outside of oneself.” Thus the Fathers will speak of God’s ecstasy – His going forth to us. But there is also our ecstasy, as we forget ourselves and rush towards Him.

It could be argued that the language of self-deprecation in liturgical prayers is very much a “remembering” and “dwelling” on the self. Within a legal metaphor this might be quite true. But we must listen to the *whole* of the prayers.

O Lord, I know that my transgressions have mounted higher than my head, but the greatness of Your compassion is incomparable and the mercy of Your bounty is indescribable and free of malice. There is no sin which surpasses Your love for mankind. Therefore, wondrous King and all gracious Lord, show Your wondrous mercy to me a sinner; show me the power of Your goodness; show me the strength of Your long-suffering mercy, and receive me a sinner as I turn to You. (St. Simeon the Translator)

We see that our sins have driven us back towards non-being and nothingness. But God in His great mercy continues to call us into existence and to raise us up from the emptiness of our sin.

I want to say a few words about evil and non-being. Non-being is not evil. It is not anything. We cannot say it is good nor can we say it is neutral. It is nothing. The Fathers recognized a trinity of existence: Being, Well-Being, Eternal Being. They also recognized another trinity: Beauty, Goodness, Truth.

It is the teaching of the Fathers that being, existence, is *inherently* good. It is the gift of the good God, who alone has true Being (“Being Beyond All Being”).

But we are created with a direction or movement (*kinesis*). That movement is from being towards well-being and eternal being. Eternal Being is true union with Christ (*theosis*).

Our call into existence is brought forth as we behold the Beauty of God. Drawn towards Him, we see that He is not only Beautiful, but that He is loving, self-emptying for the sake of all – that is – we see that He is Good. As we pursue His Goodness we move ever towards our End in Christ who is the Truth.

I have taken a few moments to set these things in their proper perspective and order because we use these words casually, without care for their proper meaning. Only in this context do we understand sin as an “ontological” problem (having to do with being).

Sin is a *movement* away from being, well-being, and eternal being. It is a distorted direction (*hamartia*: “missing the mark”). It is equally the refusal of Beauty and Goodness, without participation in the Truth.

I will try to put this into practical terms. A man sees someone else in genuine need and has plenty to spare. But he considers the matter and turns away. He has “increased” or “preserved” his wealth, but he has impoverished his soul, diminished his own existence since his existence depends utterly on his movement towards well-being and eternal-being. This he could pursue by following the commandments and the example of Christ (which is already the movement of grace within him). Christ’s self-emptying towards all of creation is the perfection of generosity. To act on generosity is union with Christ, a movement towards well-being.

When someone asks: “Is it a sin to withhold help from someone in need?” The answer is yes – but not in a merely legal sense. It is a sin – a movement towards non-existence – a movement away from the proper direction of our lives.

And it is from the depths of our non-existence that we cry out to God for mercy. Seeing His Beauty we forget ourselves (and our money, etc.) and we call out to the One who has called out to us. In our longing for His Beauty we love Him and are drawn to His Goodness. We give to the one who has need: “my brother is my life.”

I would add, in light of an earlier comment, that this forgetting of ourselves in the face of His beauty is true shame (not the toxic form). It is the confessing of our emptiness, our non-existence, in the face of

true existence (which is Beautiful). Such a pure-hearted confession is ecstatic, a movement out of the self towards the Other.

I will also add as an aside that all of this should shed much light on the importance of beauty in Orthodox liturgy and Churches, iconography, etc. It is essential – not a decoration or an afterthought. Much of the modern world sees beauty as a luxury (which it so rarely affords). I grieve deeply when I hear the modern sentiment directed towards a beautiful Church “that money should have been given to the poor.” These are the words of Judas. And those who say such things rarely give anything themselves. Beauty is not a contradiction of generosity. The movement towards Beauty is a movement towards Goodness (which contains generosity at its core).

The apprehension of Beauty is at the very heart of the preaching of the gospel. It is that which first touches the heart and draws us towards Truth. In our over-rationalized world we tend to think that it is reasoning and arguments that draw people to Christ. But this is something that comes much later. First the heart must be drawn – and this happens primarily through Beauty in its broadest sense. Many things serve this role. For C.S. Lewis it was a picture in a book of Norse Mythology and the line, “Balder the Beautiful is Dead.” Mysteriously, it pierced his young heart and remained with him until he much later perceived Christ. I have always treasured Muggeridge’s book on Mother Teresa titled, *Something Beautiful for God*. If you cannot share the beauty of the gospel, then you have likely not understood it and clearly lack the requisite gifts as of yet. This is why St. Porphyrios said, “Whoever wants to become a Christian must first become a poet.”

These are the thoughts of the Fathers, and the doorways into greater perception of the mystery of the gospel. It is the absence of such depth that reveals the poverty of legal imagery – as well as its lack of beauty.

Fr. Stephen Freeman

About Fr. Stephen Freeman

Fr. Stephen is a priest of the Orthodox Church in America, serving as Rector of St. Anne Orthodox Church in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. He is also author of *Everywhere Present* and the *Glory to God* podcast series.

ПРОПОВІДЬ НА СВЯТО РІЗДВА ЧЕСНОГО І СЛАВНОГО ПРОРОКА, ПРЕДТЕЧІ І ХРЕСТИТЕЛЯ ГОСПОДНЬОГО ІОАНА

*«Язык тих, що моляться – це рука,
якою обіймаємо Божі коліна».*
(Св. І. Золотоуст)

В ім'я Отця, і Сина, і Святого Духа!

Молитва – це безпосередня невидима зустріч створіння зі своїм Творцем. Проповідь на свято Різдва чесного і славного Пророка, Предтечі і Хрестителя Господнього Іоана Чим більше ми з Богом розмовляємо, тим більше стаємо подібні до Нього. «...То Мойсей не знав, що лице його сталося сяяти промінням від того, що Бог говорив з ним» (Вих. 34:29). А Святитель Григорій Ніський, брат Святого Василя Великого говорить: «На молитві ми не тільки підносимо духа до Бога, не тільки з Ним розмовляємо, але й з Ним перебуваємо, тішимося Його присутністю».

І ось одного разу, як у порядку своєї черги Захарія служив перед Богом, за звичаєм священства йому випало ввійти до Господнього Храму покадити. Під час кадіння багато людей молились надворі. Раптом став перед ним Ангел Господній і промовив: «Не бійся Захаріє, бо почута молитва Твоя, і жінка твоя Єлизавета, народить тобі сина, і наречеш ім'я Йому Іоан! (Лк. 1:13).

Молитва цих двох людей – Захарії і Єлизавети була почута Богом. Чому їхнє прохання було почуте Творцем? Тому, як пояснює євангелист Лука «обоє вони були праведні перед Богом, виконуючи всі заповіді і настанови Господні бездоганно»

(Лк. 1:6).

Молитва, як бачимо є ефективною, є дієвою тільки тоді, коли людина є праведною в Божих очах. Така молитва не тільки спричинилася до появи Ангела, але і до прихильності неба і рішення неба про народження Предтечі.

На жаль, Захарій не повірив словам небесного посланця. «Бо я старий, і жінка моя постарілася у днях своїх» (Лк. 1:18). Та Ангел відразу говорить на його недовір'я: «І ось ти будеш мовчати та не матимеш можливості говорити до того дня, коли збудеться це, за те, що ти не повірив словам моїм, котрі збудуться свого часу» (Лк. 1:20).

Поки Захарія звершував обряд кадіння у Храму Господньому, люди чекали його. І коли Священик вийшов і показував знаками, то народ зрозумів, що він мав якесь видіння.

І справді коли Захарія став батьком провіщеного йому сина, на восьмий день після народження за звичаєм юдеїв потрібно було дати дитині ім'я. Родичі й гості запрошені на сімейне свято, давали дитині ім'я батька – Захарія, але сам батько, коли його спитали про це написав на дощечці: «Іоан буде ім'я йому» (Лк. 1:63). Як тільки Захарія зробив напис, то відразу відкрилися йому уста, і він став

проорокувати: «Благословен Господь Бог Ізраїлів, що відвідав народ свій і створив визволення йому. І ти дитя пророком Всевишнього наречешся, бо йтимеш перед лицем Господа, щоб приготувати путі Йому» (Лк. 1:68-76).

Всі присутні дивувалися і в задумі говорили: «ким буде дитя це?» (Лк. 1:66). «Дитя ж зростало і міцніло духом» (Лк. 1:80).

Коли Предтечі Христовому було тридцять років, розпочалося служіння людям. Як сказано в Євангелії: «Було слово боже до Іоана, сина Захарії, в пустелі» (Лк. 3:2). Люди йшли на заклик проповідника – «покайтеся, наближається бо Царство Небесне» (Мт. 3:2).

Чому люди охоче слухали проповідь великого Пророка? А тому, що їхні душі давно вже прагнули таких слів, які б сколихнули їхню свідомість, збентежили розум і прояснити їхнє життя. Голос проповідника наполегливо кликав відцуратися усього лихого та гріховного, відкинути неправду, ворожнечу й ненависть, облишити все, що перешкоджає вступити в нове Царство Божої правди та благодаті.

Проповідь Предтечі мала великий успіх. До нього приходили не тільки мешканці Єрусалима, але люди з далеких країв. «І всі люди, що слухали Його, навіть і митарі, визнавши славу Бога, хрестилися хрещення Іоановим» (Лк. 7:29). Пророк Іоан з усією силою своєї прямої природи виступав проти лицемірства фарисеїв, засуджував недовірство садукеев, сміливо називаючи їх «поріддям єхидним». Він просив усім приносити плоди гідні покаєння.

А хіба нам, не здається, що в кожному з нас, хоч ми називаємося християнами в певній мірі ще живуть ті самі хиби, різні гріховні нахили, які так наполегливо засуджував Святий Пророк. Отож «голос вопіючого в пустині» сягає совісті кожного з нас, щоб ми відкрили дорогу Христові в наші серця «як написано в книзі слів Іссаї Пророка, який говорить: глас вопіючого в пустелі: приготуйте путь Господній, прямими зробіть стежі Йому. Кожна долина нехай наповниться, і всяка гора і пагорб зрівняються, і хай стане криве прямим, і вибоїсті дороги – рівними» (Лк. 3:4-5).

Не перекривайте Христові дорогу до наших сердець. Випростуймо покручені шляхи лукавства, лицемірства, кривди, неправди та обману. Знищуймо усякі приводи до взаємної ненависті й холодної байдужості. Нехай оживе в наших серцях щира братерська любов.

І ми безнастанно потребуємо від Господа Божої опіки. У Святому Євангелії читаємо: «Просіть і дасть вам, шукайте і знайдете, стукайте, і відчинять вам» (Мф. 7:7).

Тоді й помножаться наші добрі діла, бо ми будемо сумлінно виконувати обов'язки перед сім'єю, суспільством і народом і водночас будемо ширити між людьми мир, правду і любов.

Сьогодні Святий Пророк Іоан народжується знову у наших серцях, щоб дати свідчення. Він свідчить про світло – Христа. «Він не був світлом, але був посланий, щоб свідчити про Світло» (Ін. 1:8). Амінь.

– прот. Володимир Стадник

A Prayer for the Construction of our New Church

O Lord Jesus Christ our God, Cornerstone of Your holy Church, Giver of every good gift, the One who first loved us, look down upon us Your people who desire to build a new church unto Your glory and grant us the wisdom, strength, and resources to accomplish this task in accordance with Your will. Remember the friends and benefactors of this parish who support the construction of this holy church and bless them with Your good things. And as You did proclaim that even if Your disciples were silent, the very stones would cry out, so also grant that this holy church may proclaim You and draw all who dwell in the surrounding area to worship You in spirit and in truth. In flame our hearts with love for You that we may offer to You ourselves and all You have given us to the glory of Your holy Name. For You are the true Philanthropist—the Lover of Mankind—and to You do we send up glory, together with Your eternal Father, and Your most holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Молитва на Будову нашої нової Церкви

Господи Боже, Ісусе Христе наш, наріжний камінь Твоєї Церкви, Ти перший огорнув нас своєю любов'ю, Ти податель всіх земних благ, споглянь на нас, твоїх дітей, які прагнуть збудувати новий храм на Твою славу. Даруй нам мудрість, силу та ресурси для здійснення цього будівництва, якщо на це Твоя Свята воля. Благослови та підтримуй всіх жертводавців цієї парафії, які долучатимуться до будівництва цієї святині. Ти сповістив, що, навіть тоді, коли твої учні будуть мовчати, то каміння буде кричати. То ж подай, щоб ця церква, наповнена Духом Святим та Твоею правдою, наvertsала до Бога всіх тих, хто живуть в її околицях, щоб Тебе величати. Наповни наші серця любов'ю до Тебе, щоб ми віддали себе і все Тобі, на славу Твого святого імені. Бо ти справжній наш Податель – Чоловіколюбчець – і Тобі возсилаємо з безначальним Твоїм Отцем, і пресвятим, і благим, і животворящим твоїм Духом, нині і повсякчас, і на віки віків. Амінь

Sunday offering for June 17

Amount	Number
\$10.00	1
\$20.00	4
\$30.00	2
\$40.00	1
\$50.00	2
\$90.00	1
<u>\$105.00</u>	<u>1</u>
\$485.00	

Parishioner Total: \$485.00

Average / parish household (43): \$9.51

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2200.00

Deficit: <\$1715.00>

PARISHIONERS THAT ARE HOME BOUND



If you or a loved one cannot make it to Church, Fr. James would be more than pleased visit at your home, in the hospital, at a nursing home, or any other place. It is no inconvenience at all.

Please be sure to schedule a visit.



**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

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

Sermon by St. Augustine of Hippo

The Church observes the birth of John as in some way sacred. And, you will not find any other of the great men of old whose birth we celebrate officially. We celebrate John's, as we celebrate Christ's. This point cannot be passed over in silence, and if I may not perhaps be able to explain it in the way that such an important matter deserves, it is still worth thinking about it a little more deeply and fruitfully than usual. John is born of an old woman who is barren; Christ is born of a young woman who is a virgin. That John will be born is not believed, and his father is struck dumb; that Christ will be born is believed, and He is conceived by faith.

John, it seems, has been inserted as a kind of boundary between the two Testaments, the Old and the New. That he is somehow or other a boundary is something that the Lord himself indicates when He says the law and the prophets were until John. So he represents the old and heralds the new. Because he represents the old, he is born of an elderly couple; because he represents the new, he is revealed as a prophet in his

mother's womb.

Finally, he is born, he receives a name, and his father's tongue is loosed. Zachary is struck dumb and loses his voice, until John, the Lord's forerunner, is born and releases his voice for him. What does Zachary's silence mean, but that prophecy was obscure and, before the proclamation of Christ, somehow concealed and shut up? It is released and opened up by his arrival, it becomes clear when the One who was being prophesied is about to come. The releasing of Zachary's voice at the birth of John has the same significance as the tearing of the veil of the Temple at the crucifixion of Christ. If John were meant to proclaim himself, he would not be opening Zachary's mouth. The tongue is released because a voice is being born – for when John was already heralding the Lord, he was asked, who are you and he replied I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. John is the voice, but the Lord in the beginning was the Word. John is a voice for a time, but Christ is the eternal Word from the beginning.