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BULLETIN OF AUGUST 31, 2008

SUNDAY/AUGUST 31st
11th Sunday After Pentecost (Tone 2)

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour
6:30p.m. Vespers

MONDAY/SEPTEMBER 1st
Church New Year

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy

TUESDAY/SEPTEMBER 2nd

7:00p.m. Vespers
**(St. Nectarios of Aegina &
St. Edward of England)**

WEDNESDAY/SEPTEMBER 3rd

7:00p.m. Compline & Akathist to
Burning Bush Icon of Theotokos

SATURDAY/SEPTEMBER 6th
St. Maximus, Priest-Martyr

9:30a.m. Akathist to St. Maximus; Confessions
5:30p.m. Vigil; Confessions

SUNDAY/SEPTEMBER 7th
12th Sunday After Pentecost (Tone 3)
Sunday of the Environment

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour; Church School Classes
5:30p.m. Vigil

MONDAY/SEPTEMBER 8th
NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS
(One of the "12 Great Feasts")

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
7:00p.m. Outreach Committee Meeting

Fasting Days

Wednesday, September 3rd
Friday, September 5th



*"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink."
John 7:37*

THE CHURCH NEW YEAR

Do you know why the first day of September marks the beginning of the Church Year? We are accustomed to think of January 1st as the beginning of the year. But the tradition of computing the start of a new year with the Fall season was common to the lands of the Bible and to all the lands around the Mediterranean. The Summer harvest was at an end, the crops were stored, and people prepared for a new agricultural cycle. It was an appropriate time to begin a new year.

On September 1st at the divine services we pray:

O Christ our God, Thy Kingdom is an everlasting one and Thy lordship is over all. Thou hast made all things with wisdom and has established proper times and seasons for our lives. We give thanks unto Thee in all circumstances and for all things. Lord, bless the beginning of our Church Year with Thy goodness. Grant that this liturgical year be for all of us a year of grace. Make us worthy with purity of heart always to praise Thee. O Lord glory to Thee!

Open Door Ministry – September Month

An aspect of our “Outreach Program” is to keep the doors of our church open seasonally on Sundays as an opportunity for visitors to look in and perhaps say a prayer if they wish. A sign-up sheet for the month of September may be found on the vestibule stand. The Doors are kept open – weather permitting – from 12:30p.m. to 2:00p.m. For more information please speak with Reader Symeon Combs.

Offerings for the Week of August 31st

Olive Oil – in memory of Michael and Justina; for the health of Zachary (namesday); in memory of Joan.

Wine – for the health of Fr. Deacon Paul and Patricia on their wedding anniversary.

Namesday Greetings

St. Symeon/Sept. 1st: Reader Symeon Combs

St. Edward/Sept. 3rd: Edward Sarchisian

St. Zachariah/Sept. 5th: Zachary Sokol and Zachary Holot

Many Blessed Years!

The Poor Basket for the Month of September

Is earmarked for relief work for refugees in Georgia and South Ossetia. Please help our Orthodox Christians in need.

Our Parish Website: www.ssppoc.org

Will have posted any important information that needs to be communicated. Go to “What Is New”

Parish Council Meeting

September 18th, Thursday at 7:00p.m.

Metropolitan & Surgery

His Beatitude Metropolitan Herman is scheduled for lumber spine back surgery on Sept. 9th at Shady Side Hospital in Pittsburgh. After his surgery, Metropolitan Herman will have a short hospital stay and will continue his recovery at home.

Parish Synodicon – Memory Eternal!

Sept. 27, 2008	Sophie Wassel (40 th Day)
Aug. 31, 1927	Jacob Kava
Aug. 31, 1972	Julia Marchuk
Aug. 31, 1975	John Kluchnik
Aug. 31, 1988	Fr. Nicholas Kiryluk
Sept. 01, 1922	Constantine Maykovsky
Sept. 01, 1977	Edward Wasitowski
Sept. 01, 1978	Pauline Trosko
Sept. 01, 1998	Peter Lorenick
Sept. 01, 2007	Fr. George (John) Lewis
Sept. 03, 1956	Maria Schander
Sept. 04, 2000	Marina Audrey Haitch
Sept. 05, 1917	Peter Darensky

Opportune Times for Holy Confession

Are posted in the weekly and monthly bulletin.

You may also make other arrangements for Confession by contacting Father James.

NJ Deanery Clergy Meeting – Sep. 9th

On this day, our parish will host the meeting. If you can help in food preparation for the luncheon on this day please speak with Father James.

Concerning Abkhazia and South Ossetia

- Both these regions are populated by a large number of Orthodox Christians and we are concerned about the welfare of all, be they Russians, Ossetians or Georgians.
- The IOCC Funds will be distributed to both the Orthodox Churches of Georgia and Russia, as refugees are to be found in the territories of both Churches.
- We pray for peace for all peoples in these regions.
- It is truly hypocritical for Washington and London to accuse Russia of breaking international law, UN Security Council Resolutions and principles of sovereign territory – while the West did the very same thing to Orthodox Serbia by seizing the Kosovo region and granting it unlawful independence.



The Church is *People* — God's People

Above all, the Church is a **worshipping community of believers** who share a common faith, hope and love for God. The collective experience and aspirations of God's People are revealed through the Church's

WORSHIP

The Church's **liturgical, festal and sacramental worship** gathers God's People into a united community which

- **affirms** its common faith in God's transforming love for us;
- **shares** its faith and fears, joys and sorrows through fellowship; and
- **publicly** proclaims the Good News of Jesus Christ while rendering thanks to God for His many blessings.

THE LITURGICAL CYCLE

The Church possesses a cycle of worship services which

- revolves around the celebration of the Church's most important service, the Eucharistic Divine Liturgy;
- enables us to set aside a certain portion of each day to praise and thank God, and
- serves as a constant reminder that in all things God must be glorified.

THE MOST COMMONLY CELEBRATED LITURGICAL SERVICES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

THE DIVINE LITURGY

The Divine Liturgy, during which the faithful gather to hear the Word of God and to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, is the highlight of the Church's worship. All worship finds its reference point in the Eucharistic Liturgy.

COMPLINE AND NOCTURNS

Are night services serving as reminders that God must be praised at all times. Nocturns (the Midnight Service) are rarely served in parish settings.

VESPERS

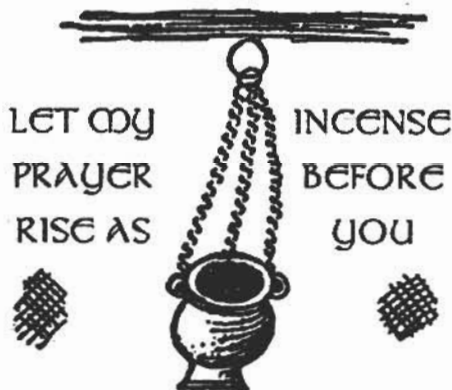
Begins the liturgical day. This evening service

- Reminds us of the coming of Christ into the world as the "Light who enlightens all," and
- Relates the most important elements of God's plan for the salvation of His people.

MATINS (ORTHOS)

Is the Church's morning service. At Matins we:

- Proclaim the glory of Jesus Christ,
- Learn, through the various hymns, more about God's plan for His People, and
- Prepare most directly for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.



THE HOURS

Are short services consisting of prayers and readings primarily taken from the Old Testament book of Psalms. There are four Hours:

- The First Hour (6 AM) is often celebrated after Matins.
- The Third (9 AM) and Sixth Hours (Noon) are often prayed before the Divine Liturgy
- The Ninth Hour (3 PM) may be celebrated before Vespers.

Each of the Hours carries with it a particular theme, thereby reminding us of the many deeds Jesus Christ accomplished for our salvation.

Other lesser Hours called the *Mesoria* or *Inter-Hours* and the *Typica* may be served during the Fasts.

Deification

Our life as Christians is guided by the belief that we are called **“to become partakers of the divine nature”** (2 Peter 1:4). We are invited to live the very life of God and to become intimately related to Him. This seems too daring an expression for many people, but the Spirit of God is daring in the vision it sets for us as we travel on our path. Our closeness to God is described as that of branches with the vine (John 15:4), comparable to the union of the Father and the Son (John 17:22-23).



“In Christ the fullness of deity resides in bodily form. Yours is a sharing of this fullness, in Him who is the head of every principality and power” (Colossians 2:9-10).

We can approach the Unattainable God with the intimate confidence of children to their *abba/Father* (Romans 8:14-17). It is with this confidence that the Fathers affirmed, **“God became man so that man can be made divine.”**

This was God’s plan from the beginning. And so the human race was:

- ⊗ **Created in God’s Image and Likeness** (Genesis 1:26-28) – capable of living in harmonious relationships with others; like the Trinity, in whose image we are.
- ⊗ **Fallen, but Recreated in Christ** – *“Through the fall our nature was stripped of divine illumination and resplendence. But the Word of God had pity upon our disfigurement. In His compassion He took our nature upon Himself, and on Tabor He manifested it to His elect disciples clothed once again most brilliantly. He shows what we once were and what we shall become through Him in the age to come, if we choose to live our present life as far as possible in accordance with His ways.”* (St. Gregory Palamas)
- ⊗ **Gifted with Eternal Life** – even now, by being physically united to Christ and to have the Holy Spirit dwell within us through the Holy Mysteries.

“What is this mystery all about me? I had a share in the image; I did not keep it. And now He partakes of my flesh that He may both save the image and make the flesh immortal. He unites with us in a second way more marvelous than the first.” (St Gregory the Theologian, *Oration 33:12*).

Nationalism, Man and Orthodoxy

Fr. Gibran Ramlaoui

An ancient problem, yet still fresh and relevant, stands as an unsurmountable wall in the face of the process of Orthodoxy in America. This problem is ethnic nationalism.

Nationalism is not an empty word. It is as true as the individual who is seeking himself outside himself. There is nothing authentic outside man, who is the image of God. However, the individual-wrapped up in his limited self-has the illusion that he might find his self where there is no real self; in the nation or the mass to which he belongs. The nationalistic man might be honest in putting his hope in his nation, because he is trying to establish his identity and find security for himself. Nevertheless, his point of departure is erroneous. Whenever we build the roof before the foundation, then the house is liable to fall. And the eyes cannot be placed in the back of our head, if we expect to move ahead and reach forward. Therefore, when we discuss nationalism, we ought to pose the real problem, in order to find the real answer; The problem is the meaning of Man. And any attempt to solve this problem outside this man-perspective is condemned in advance to failure.

Then, let us put the picture within its real frame. We shall essay in this short paper to establish the fact that man is not only more important than nationalism; but we shall state with assurance and certainty that Man is both the source of every meaning, and the end of all ends.

When God created Man in His image, He gave him both meaning and the force to grant meaning to every thing that is in existence. On one hand, man is not complete in himself; on the other, the world has no meaning without him. He is not complete because he receives his fullness in God; and the world was created for him, consequently, he is the meaning and the purpose of the world.

And Christ did not come to save the world, nor the nation - (what did His own nation do to Him?), but rather He came to save the Man. Thus He confirmed that which was already established by His Father: Man is the king of all creations. Not only is Man preferred to things, but also he is above even his own social ideas and political concepts. Which means he is preferred to Nationalism.

Man, as he is the meaning of the world, does not however create his own image, nor his own value. He receives it from God. Therefore, when he (Man) rejects God, he is, at the same time, rejecting his own meaning and superiority to all other creations. If Man is the meaning of the world, still God is the meaning of Man. In this perspective, Nationalism is a false shelter under which Man tries to take refuge in order wrongly to secure his being.

In Nationalism, Man loses Christ. Or rather, Christ ceases to be the prototype after which we are to become. Because, in baptism we put on Christ. And then we become the dwelling-place of the Trinity. And this gives us our meaning as human beings; consequently, if we search for meaning outside ourselves we would be denying the existence of God in us. Rather we feel the dreadful emptiness from which we try to escape; then we fall into the hades of Nationalism. Man can never be empty. If God does not fill us, then something else has to make us feel full. But are we really full when we replace Christ with Nationalism? Are we not then doing exactly that which the atheists do by denying God directly and completely? Are not we then denying our real self? What is left of us if our real Self is gone? And what is our self without Christ? Therefore, the danger of Nationalism is far more destructive to our Faith than what we normally think it can be.

One might think that I am eliminating the loyalty that one has to have for his country or nation. God forbid! I am not treating here the relationship of Christ to the State or Country. This is a topic that can be handled from another scope. All that I am saying here is that Christ comes first and before my Nationalistic feelings. The matter is one of order or preference and not of exclusion. Christ is. My nation is. Which one is first, not which one should eliminate the other. What is a Nation? It is-in a very simple expression-a group of human beings. Now, what is a human being? He is the image or the temple of God. Hence, God is first, not the Nation or the national structure.

To what am I leading? To this question, I answer: I am a Christian Orthodox. Ultimately, Christ only is the meaning of my being. Therefore, I say I am Orthodox, then I mention my nationality as a frame, a social structure, no more. I can be without a country, without nationality. But, I can never be without being. And in being, I am the image of God, not of a nation. I am the temple of God, not of a nation. I, with other beings, form a nation. So the nation acquires its existence and identity by me-and thou, and he- not from itself. A nation does not exist in-itself, for-itself. I give the nation meaning. And I draw my own meaning from God. Therefore, God-and I-we come before Nation, and we are more important than Nation.

If we, Orthodox, want to be really Orthodox, we have inevitably to consider Orthodoxy in its authentic context: Jesus the Christ. Then, you are Russian and speak Russian, I am Lebanese and I speak Arabic, but, we are both Orthodox. Then no language, no nationality, no customs, no traditions can divide the one Faith that you and I have in Christ.

When Jesus sent out His Disciples to preach the Gospel, He did not limit them to any nation nor race, nor language, nor country. "Go ye to all nations, preach to them and baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." This is Christianity that Christ wants. And this is the Orthodoxy that we ought to establish all over the world, especially in America. We Orthodox in this great land are scattered and dispersed like sheep without a shepherd, like lost little children in the wilderness. Empty we are of Christ, because we do not adopt Him as our unifying power. We do not want to be Christian first, and Americans second. As a matter of fact, we could not yet become Americans, because we are still hanging and clinging to our former nationality. Two things are required of the Orthodox people in America:

1. To integrate ourselves totally and integrally in the American Nation.
2. To give up, consequently, our former concept of nationalism.

But, and before these two requirements are fulfilled, we have to be committedly aware that we are Orthodox. Because, to be a good American one has to be a good Orthodox (I am speaking as an Orthodox): but the reciprocal is not necessarily true.

What Orthodoxy, in America, needs now and right now, is that all the Orthodox become Orthodox.

Who is going to do it, and how to do it?

I leave the answer to our faithful and to our spiritual leaders.

Are they willing to perform this magnificent task?



From the June, 1969 issue of Word Magazine of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese.

Posted: 06-Jul-08

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Article link: <http://www.orthodoxytoday.org/articles8/Ramlaoui-Nationalism-Man-and-Orthodoxy.php>



Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal