

*The Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
Of North America*

*The Diocese of Eagle River and the Northwest
Antiochian Orthodox Church of the Annunciation*

كنيسة البشارة الأرثوذكسية الانطاكية

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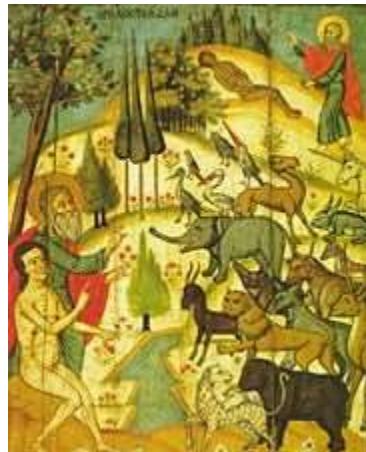
Sunday September 4th, 2016

الأحد الحادى عشر بعد العنصرة والأحد الحادى عشر من مئى

القديس الشهيد في الكهنة بابيلا أسقف أنطاكية

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost and Eleventh Sunday of Matthew

Hieromartyr Babylas of Antioch



Saturday Service: Vespers at 6 PM (starting 9/17)

Sunday Services: Matins 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy 10:30 AM

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تغييرات في القداس

Changes in the Liturgy

الايسونيكون

هلْ نسجد ونركع للمسيح ملכנו والهنا، خلصنا يا ابن الله يا من قام من بين الاموات، لنرتل لك هللويا!

Entrance Hymn

O Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ.

Save us, O Son of God, who art risen from the dead, who sing to Thee: Alleluia!

طروبارية القيامة (بالحن الثاني)

عندما انحدرت إلى الموت أيها الحياة الذي لا يموت. حينئذ أمتَّ الجحيم ببرق لا هوتك. وعندما أقفت الأموات من تحت الثرى. صرَّخَ نحوك جميع القواسم السماويين. أيها المسيح الإله معطي الحياة المجد لك.

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone Two)

When Thou didst submit Thyself unto death, O Thou deathless and immortal One, then Thou didst destroy hell with Thy Godly power. And when Thou didst raise the dead from beneath the earth, all the powers of Heaven did cry aloud unto Thee: O Christ, Thou giver of life, glory to Thee.

طروبارية القديس بابيلا (بالحن الرابع)

صرت مُشابهاً للرَّسُّل في أحوالهم، وخليفةً في كراماتهم، فوجدت بالعمل المرفأ إلى التأثير يا أيها اللاهيج بالله. لأجل ذلك تتبعَ كلمة الحق باستقامة، وجاهدت عن الإيمان حتى الدم، أيها الشهيد في الكهنة بابيلا. فتشفع إلى المسيح الإله أن يخلص نفوسنا.

Troparion of St. Babylas of Antioch (Tone Four)

By choosing the Apostles' way of life, thou hast succeeded to their throne. Inspired by God, thou didst find the way to divine contemplation through the practice of virtue. After teaching the Word of Truth

without error, thou didst defend the Faith to the very shedding of thy blood, O Hieromartyr Babylas.
Entreat the Lord our God to save our souls.

(Troparion of the Annunciation – Tone 4)

Today is the beginning of our salvation, and the manifestation of the mystery from the ages; for the Son of God becometh the Son of the Virgin, and Gabriel proclaimeth grace. Wherefore, do we shout with him to the Theotokos, Rejoice, O full of grace! The Lord is with thee.

البشارة – بالحن الرابع
اليوم رأس خلاصنا، وإعلان السر الذي منذ الدهور، لأن ابن الله يصير ابن البتول، وجبرائيل بالنعمة يبشر، فلذلك ونحن معه لنهتف نحو والدة الإله، إفرحي أيتها الممتلأة نعمةً الرب معكِ.

قداق مولد العذراء (بالحن الرابع)

إن يواكيم وحنة من عار العقر حرّرا. وآدم وحواء من فساد الموت اعتقا بمولده المقدس أيتها الطاهرة. فله يعيّد شعبك
إذ قد نجا من وصمة الزلات هاتفا نحوك. العقر تلد والدة الإله المغذية حياتنا.

Kontakion of the Nativity of the Theotokos (Tone Four)

By thy holy birth-giving, O pure one, Joachim and Anna were delivered from the reproach of barrenness; and Adam and Eve were delivered from the corruption of death; thy people do celebrate it, having been saved from the stain of iniquity, crying unto thee, the barren doth give birth to the Theotokos, who nourishes our life.

الرسالة للأحد الحادي عشر بعد العنصرة

Epistle for the Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

The Lord is my strength and my song!

قوتي وتسليتي الربُّ!

The Lord has chastened me sorely!

أدبًا أذبّني الربُّ!

The Reading is from Saint Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians (9:2-12).

فصلٌ من رسالة القديس بولس الرسول الأولى إلى أهل كورنثوس (9:2-12).

Brethren, you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. This is my defense to those who would examine me. Do we not have the right to our food and drink? Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a wife, as the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord

يا إخوة إنَّ خاتَم رسالتِي هو أنتُم في الربِّ وهذا هو احتجاجي عند الذين يفحصونَّي * العَلَّا لَا سُلْطَانَ لَنَا أَنْ نَأْكُلْ وَنَشَرَبْ * العَلَّا لَا سُلْطَانَ لَنَا أَنْ نَجُولَ بِامْرَأَةٍ أَخْتٍ كَسَائِرِ الرَّسُلِ وَإِخْوَةِ الْرَّبِّ وَصَفَّا * أَمْ أَنَا وَبَرَنَابَا وَحْدَنَا لَا سُلْطَانَ لَنَا أَنْ لَا نَشَغَلْ * مَنْ يَتَجَنَّدْ قَطْ وَالنَّفَقَةُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ مَنْ يَغْرِسُ كَرْمًا وَلَا يَأْكُلْ مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ أَوْ مَنْ

and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Who tends a flock without getting some of the milk? Do I say this on human authority? Does not the law say the same? For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of a share in the crop. If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits? If others share this rightful claim upon you, do not we still more? Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

يَرْعَى قَطِيعًا وَلَا يَأْكُلُ مِنْ لَبَنِ الْقَطِيعِ * أَعْلَمُ بِهَا بِحَسَبِ الْبَشَرِيَّةِ أَمْ لِيَسَ النَّامُوسُ أَيْضًا يَقُولُ هَذَا * فَإِنَّهُ كُتِبَ فِي نَامُوسِ مُوسَى لَا تَكُمْ ثُورًا دَارِسًا . الْعَلَى اللَّهِ تُهْمَهُ التِّهْرَانُ * أَمْ قَالَ ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَجْلِنَا لَا مَحَالَةَ . بَلْ إِنَّمَا كُتِبَ مِنْ أَجْلِنَا . لَأَنَّهُ يَنْبَغِي لِلْحَارِثِ أَنْ يَحْرُثَ عَلَى الرَّجَاءِ وَلِلْدَارِسِ عَلَى الرَّجَاءِ أَنْ يَكُونَ شَرِيكًا فِي الرَّجَاءِ * إِنْ كُنَّا نَحْنُ قَدْ زَرَعْنَا لَكُمُ الرُّوحِيَّاتِ أَفَيْكُونُ عَظِيمًا أَنْ تَحْصُدُ مِنْكُمُ الْجَسَدِيَّاتِ * إِنْ كَانَ آخَرُونَ يَشْتَرِكُونَ فِي السُّلْطَانِ عَلَيْكُمْ أَفْلَسْنَا نَحْنُ أَوْلَى . لَكِنَّا لَمْ نَسْتَعْمِلُ هَذَا السُّلْطَانَ بَلْ نَحْتَمِلُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ لِتَلَّا تُسَبِّبَ تَعْوِيقًا مَا لِبَشَارَةِ الْمَسِيحِ .

الإنجيل للأحد الحادي عشر من متى

Gospel for the Eleventh Sunday of Matthew

The Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew (18:23-35).

The Lord spoke this parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents; and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees,

فصلٌ شريفٌ من بشارَةِ القديسِ مَتَّى الإنجيلي البشير، التلميذُ الطاهرُ (18:23-35).

قَالَ الرَّبُّ هَذَا الْمَثَلُ . يُشَبِّهُ مَلْكُوتُ السَّمَاوَاتِ إِنْسَانًا مَلِكًا أَرَادَ أَنْ يُحَاسِبَ عَبْدَهُ * فَلَمَّا بَدَأَ بِالْمَحَاسِبَةِ أَحْضَرَ إِلَيْهِ وَاحِدًا عَلَيْهِ عَشْرَةَ أَلْفِ وَزْنَةً * وَإِذْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ مَا يُوْفَى أَمْرَ سَيِّدُهُ أَنْ يُبَاعَ هُوَ وَأَمْرَ اُنْثَهُ وَأَوْلَادُهُ وَكُلُّ مَا لَهُ وَيُوْفَى عَنْهُ * فَخَرَّ ذَلِكَ الْعَبْدُ سَاجِدًا لَهُ قَائِلًا كُلَّ مَا لَكَ * فَرَقَ سَيِّدُ ذَلِكَ الْعَبْدِ وَأَطْلَقَهُ وَتَرَكَ تَمَهَّلًا عَلَيَّ فَأُوْفِيَ لَهُ الدَّيْنُ * وَبَعْدَ مَا خَرَجَ ذَلِكَ الْعَبْدُ وَجَدَ عَدْدًا مِنْ رُفَاقَيْهِ مَدْبُونًا لَهُ بِمِئَةِ دِينَارٍ فَأَمْسَكَهُ وَأَخَذَ يَحْنُفُهُ قَائِلًا أَوْفَنِي مَا لَيْ عَلَيَّ فَخَرَّ ذَلِكَ الْعَبْدُ عَلَى قَدَمَيْهِ وَطَلَبَ إِلَيْهِ قَائِلًا تَمَهَّلًا عَلَيَّ فَأُوْفِيَ كُلَّ مَا لَكَ *

imploring him, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But that same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat he said, 'Pay me what you owe.' So his fellow servant fell down and besought him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and put him in prison till he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you besought me; and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord delivered him to the jailers, till he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

فَأَبَىٰ وَمَضَىٰ وَطَرَحَهُ فِي السِّجْنِ حَتَّىٰ يُوْفِيَ الدَّيْنَ * فَلَمَّا رَأَىٰ رُّفَاقُهُ مَا كَانَ حَزَنُوا جِدًّا وَجَاءُوا فَأَعْلَمُوا سِيدَهُمْ بِكُلِّ مَا كَانَ * حَيْنَيْذِ دَعَاهُ سِيدُهُ وَقَالَ لَهُ أَيُّهَا الْعَبْدُ الشَّرِيرُ كُلُّ مَا كَانَ عَلَيْكَ تَرَكْتُهُ لَكَ لَا تَكُونَ طَلَبْتَ إِلَيَّ * أَفَمَا كَانَ يَنْبَغِي لَكَ أَنْ تَرْحَمَ أَنْتَ أَيْضًا رَفِيقًا كَمَا رَحِمْتُكَ أَنَا * وَغَضِيبَ سِيدُهُ وَدَفَعَهُ إِلَى الْمَعْذِيْنَ حَتَّىٰ يُوْفِيَ جَمِيعَ مَا لَهُ عَلَيْهِ * فَهَكَذَا أَبِي السَّمَاوِيُّ يَصْنَعُ بِكُمْ إِنْ لَمْ تَتَرُكُوا مِنْ قَلْوِيْكُمْ كُلُّ وَاحِدٍ لِأَخِيهِ زَلَّاتِهِ.

❖ Church Announcements

- ❖ **Memory Eternal:** the 40 days memorial for Ms. Hiam Haddad the mother of Shakib and Michel Swaidan is this Sunday. May her memory be eternal.
- ❖ **Church School Registration:** Registration for Sunday School will continue. It is \$20 per child. Please, see Mary Basmajian or Khouryia. Teachers Training: September 10th. First day of Church School is September 17th at 4:30 PM. Blessing of Teachers and Students will be on Sunday September 11th at the end of the Liturgy. Please make sure to bring your children to receive this blessing for the new year.

- ❖ **The Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos**: will be celebrated with a Vesperal Liturgy on September 7th at 7 PM. Fasting for communion: 6 hours before.
- ❖ **Young Adult Group**: We are forming a young adults group at our church (18-35). This group will join together every week to have fun activities, do work of charity, and spend time learning from one another about life, faith, and spirituality. Please, pay attention for the next meeting announcement.
- ❖ **Back to School Bike Check**: Monday 9/5, 9-11am at Glenbrook Community Hall parking lot, 3524 45 street SW.
- ❖ **Healing Earth conference**: “Orthodox Christian Perspectives on Ecology and Climate Change”. The Conference will be at Cranbrook, BC from Oct 13-15 2016.
- ❖ **The Feast of the Elevation of the Cross**: is celebrated on September 13th at 6 PM starting with Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy. Ladies Organization please provide the flowers to decorate the tray. After the Divine Liturgy, we will gather around a bonfire in the church's backyard, roast hotdogs and marshmallows, and continue the celebration.
- ❖ **Wednesday Vespers and Bible Study**: starting in **September 21st** at 7 PM, we will go back to every Wednesday Vespers followed by Bible study.
- ❖ **Holy Bread**: Those who are signing for Holy Bread please, check the signup sheet to make sure no one else has signed for that day. If you like to do a 40 days memorial, also check the signup sheet to make sure no one else's name is on the list.
- ❖ **Church Cleaning**: Those who offer the Holy Bread also clean the church. Those who don't want to clean the church can pay to have it cleaned. Simon is willing to clean the church for \$50. Please, pay him directly.
- ❖ **Friday Family Nights**: Starting in **September 9th at 7 PM**, we will go back to having family nights. Also September 23rd. We will have Vespers at 7 PM followed by fun evening activities for the entire church family.
- ❖ **Orthodox Women's Retreat**: from Friday September 16 to Sunday, September 18th, 2016. Fr. Michael Gillis is the retreat master. The topic is: “Seeing the World as an Icon”. Contact Ghada Ziadeh 403-240-2549 ziadehe@telus.net. I encourage our ladies to make every effort to attend this retreat. It will be spiritually beneficial. Participants travel from all over North America to attend and it is here in our own city! Don't miss this opportunity to pray and learn about your faith with your sisters in Christ.

- ❖ **Giving back to God**: Our church depends on your generous giving back to God for all His blessings in your life. Please, give generously and regularly and God will bless you back a 100 times. Make sure you support your church even during the summer, the bills don't stop during the summer. Give a percentage of your income. Write your name on the envelope for a receipt.
 - ❖ **Blessing of your home**: If your home has not been blessed this year, please make an appointment with Fr. George Dahdouh to bless your home.
 - ❖ **Missing Sunday Liturgy**: Attending Sunday Liturgy should be part of our regular life as a family, we should not miss church unless we are really sick. Make attending church every Sunday an important part of your family life. **The family that worships together, stays together.**
 - ❖ **In an Emergency**: If you go to the hospital or have a scheduled surgery, please call Fr. Dahdouh at 403/993-7945 anytime day or night 24 hours 7 days a week.
 - ❖ **Attention all members**: Please, sign up to offer the Holy Bread for your good health and for the health of your family. Choose a Sunday and see one of the ladies officers. Also, we should sponsor coffee hour after Liturgy, keep it light. Every family is asked to pick up a Sunday.
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رسم إشارة الصليب

ما من مسيحي مؤمن أو غير مؤمن، ملتزم أو غير ملتزم، شيخاً كان أو شاباً أو طفلاً، إلاّ ويرسم إشارة الصليب.

ما ذا تعني في الحقيقة هذه الإشارة وكيف تُرسم في الكنيسة الأرثوذكسيّة.

- ضم الأصابع الثلاثة الأولى:

لكي نرسم إشارة الصليب بالشكل الصحيح، علينا أولاً أن نضمّ الأصابع الثلاثة الأولى معًا من اليد اليمنى تعبيراً عن الإيمان بوحدة الثالوث، أي إنَّ الله الآب، الله الابن، والله الروح القدس إلى واحد في ثلاثة أقانيم.

- **طوى الأصبعين الآخرين**: نطوي الأصبعين الآخرين على راحة اليد إشارةً إلى الإيمان بطبيعتي ابن الله الإلهية والإنسانية، أي إنَّ يسوع هو إله تامٌ وإنسان تامٌ.

- **راحة اليد**: أمّا راحة اليد فهي ترمز إلى رحم العذراء مريم والدة الإله حيث وحد ابنها الطبيعتين الإلهية والإنسانية معاً.

اليد اليمنى إلى الرأس: نرفع يدنا اليمنى إلى الرأس حتى تلامس الجبهة، لأنّها الجزء الأعلى من جسم الإنسان، مشيرين إلى العلّى أي إلى السماء، ونقول باسم "الآب"، لأنّ الله الآب هو مصدر كلّ الخليقة ولأنّه سينير عقولنا كي نفهم تعاليم الحياة الروحية التي نسمعها في الكنيسة.

تنزيل اليد اليمنى إلى البطن: ثم ننزل باليد اليمنى إلى البطن حتى تلامسه أيضاً ونقول "والابن" مشيرين بهذا النزول إلى تنازل الله من السماوات وتجسّده في بطن مريم العذراء، وسيملاً أحشاءنا وقلوبنا بالمحبة له وللآخرين.

لاماسة اليد اليمنى الكتف: بعدها تلامس اليد اليمنى الكتفَ الأيمن ونقول "والروح القدس" لأنّ يسوع بعد قيامته وصعوده إلى السماء وجلوسيه عن يمين الآب أرسل لنا الروح القدس المعنّي الذي سوف يقوّينا ويعطينا القوّة الجسدية والروحية لنعمل مشيئة الآب وإرادته.

الانتقال إلى الكتف السرى: ثم ننتقل إلى الكتف اليسرى فنقول "الإله الواحد. آمين". وكأننا، بهذا الانتقال من اليمين إلى اليسار، نلفّ الكون بأكمله، ونؤكّد سرّ التدبير الخلاصي الثالثي.

نحن نرسم هذه الإشارة مرات كثيرة خلال صلواتنا والخدم الإلهية، عند دخولنا إلى الكنيسة وتقبيل الأيقونة، قبل وبعد قراءة الإنجيل، قبل الطعام وبعده، عند الانطلاق بالسيارة، عند المباشرة بالدرس أو بالعمل، قبل النوم وبعد النهوض من النوم...

ويجب ألا تُرسم إشارة الصليب باستعجال، وإنّما دائماً بوقار وانتباهٍ وتروّ مع إحناصه للرأس دلالةً على التواضع والتوكير، لأنّ الصليب نفسه كليّ الوقار ولأنّه السلاح الذي لا يُغلب، الذي به ننتصر على كلّ شرٍ. فهو تاجٌ لكلّ مؤمن حَسَن العبادة. إنّه المنارة للنور الأبدي. وهو كما جاء في قانون الصليب الكريّم "حافظ الأطفال الكلّي تسبيحه". فالسلام عليك يا عوداً مغبّطاً.

Speaking In Tongues

August 18, 2016 by Fr. Barnabas Powell



It's one of (if not the) fastest growing forms of Christianity in the world, and it's the movement I came from when I converted to Orthodoxy so many years ago. I'm talking about the Pentecostal movement. And one of the most distinctive aspects of Pentecostalism is something called "speaking in tongues." Every month I get some question or comment or inquiry about my attitude about this supernatural phenomenon so I thought I'd take this opportunity of today's lesson to talk about it.

First, "speaking in tongues" or glossolalia as it is known, is a common religious phenomenon in practically every religion from paganism to even Islam. The ecstatic utterance inspired by some spirit is as old as humanity itself. So, it isn't surprising to have some form of this spiritual; manifestation present in Christian history. But, how are Orthodox Christians suppose to "be the bee" and find that which is edifying and good in this while avoiding the bad?

Look at our lesson today in 1 Corinthians 14:6-19:

BRETHREN, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how shall I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played? And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle? So with yourselves; if you in a tongue utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air. There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning; but if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me. So with yourselves; since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church. Therefore, he who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. What am I to do? I will pray with spirit and I will sing with the mind also. Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how can any one in the position of an outsider say the "Amen" to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? For you may give thanks well enough, but the other man

is not edified. I thank God that I speak in tongues more than you all; nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind, in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

St. Paul is still trying to get those lovable, but unruly Corinthians to be sober in their faith. And it seems like there were a lot of folks who spoke in tongues there. But their lack of discipline, sobriety, and love for one another had reduced their gatherings to shameful displays.

First Paul insists that when the Church gathers, it be about “us” not “me.” One of my own challenges as I was moving away from Pentecostalism was the very self-centered nature of my spiritual experiences. It was all about making me feel better. I was using faith like a drug to numb my pain and to change my mood. But the timeless faith is about the real spiritual struggle of becoming like Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, most experiences of speaking in tongues today is motivated by that very self-centered spirit. This is the first clue that this spiritual manifestation needs to be examined closely before we Orthodox say this is healthy!

Next, St. Paul encourages the Corinthians to desire being understood more than being emotionally satisfied. This goes to the heart of my own suspicion about the modern manifestation of speaking in tongues. I know some will say “But, father, this is my prayer language in my private prayer closet.” I understand that but we do not live for ourselves in the Orthodox faith. We live for others. And my desire should always be to be understood and to teach and communicate the mysteries of the Faith well for my hearers and not some attempt to wow them with my spiritual manifestations. Of course, being understood in our worship services has many more implications as well!

Finally, my own experience with speaking in tongues ceased when I was chrismated into the Church. Perhaps this was a particular discipline for me to move me away from the habit-forming emotional religious experiences of my past, but I no longer speak in tongues, and I’m happy with that. All religious experiences have to be placed under the loving and wise scrutiny of a loving community, the Church. We have to avoid the “me” mentality of religious experiences and learn the power of living with the wisdom of the timeless faith.

Today, are your religious experiences under the tutelage of the timeless Church? Or are you insisting that your faith medicate you into avoiding the true remedy of your soul? It’s not easy being Orthodox on Purpose.

You HAVE to Be Prepared!

August 31, 2016 by Fr. Barnabas Powell



He was serious when he said he didn't "need" to go to church to be a Christian. He could just be walking through the woods and sense God's presence. I had been wondering where he'd been. You see he had been quite faithful up until about a year ago and then, poof, he was missing. Once I tracked him down and was able to spend some time with him, I heard all the familiar words: "My job is very busy," "We've been traveling a lot." But then he hit me with the walking in the woods story and I began to see. This man did not want to be in God's presence on God's terms. He wanted to be in God's presence on his terms.

But it doesn't work that way! You see, the whole point of the Faith is to wake us up to conforming our life to God's life, not remaking a god in our own image. That's just one more icon of hell and it makes God too small to transform me!

Look at our lesson today in Hebrews 9:1-7:

BRETHREN, the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary. For a tent was prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence; it is called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain stood a tent called the Holy of Holies, having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, which contained a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. These preparations having thus been made, the priests go continually into the outer tent, performing their ritual duties; but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood which he offers for himself and for the errors of the people.

Notice how often the word "prepare" is used in this passage. It is a huge hint to you and me today about WHY preparation is both necessary and difficult.

First, preparation is necessary precisely because my awareness for the need for preparation is the first step to true repentance. And I am never going to be Orthodox on Purpose without repentance. In fact, St. Isaac the Syrian insists that “this life was given to you for repentance. Do not waste it on vain pursuits.” The lifestyle of repentance is God’s way of keeping us awake to the subtle temptations of going to “sleep” about my need for Him! Everyday you and I are tempted with the slumber of self-delusion. Delusions that suggest “I’m OK” or “I’m so busy” or “I’m not as bad as that person” all work to keep me bound to a lifestyle that doesn’t prepare me to enjoy God’s presence or His Life. So much so that the powerful symptom of not “enjoying God” or the Faith should be the loud alarm in my heart that something is not right. So, God gives me the gift of repentance to keep me aware of my need to prepare.

Next, preparation grants me the gift of “symphonia!” Imagine the soul affirming message that God Himself invites me to “work” with Him in transforming my life to be able to embrace His Life! God loves me. God values me. God chooses, out of His freedom, to dignify me with His respect. He invites; He doesn’t enslave. And this invitation by our loving and respectful God throws into stark relief how my selfishness and my spiritual poverty treat others. I do insist. I insist on my “rights.” I insist on being respected. I insist on “fair” treatment, all the while justifying the mistreatment of others for my benefit. This eternal loop of slavery can only be broken by learning to be in “symphonia” with God. My active participation in my spiritual life and avoiding the soul destroying delusion of Faith on automatic pilot or being Orthodox by accident is WHY active preparation makes a person like God.

Today, God has done everything to prepare you and me to be like Him; to be free from a too small life. God has paved the way for you and me to participate in our own preparation for Him by granting us His Church to lavish on us the wisdom of the saints and the path to peace. And it all starts for you as you decided day by day to be Orthodox on Purpose!

P.S. We launch our “[A Journey to Fullness](#)” outreach and evangelism video series on October 3rd this year! Keep up with this exciting resource at www.journeytofullness.com. So many of you made this day possible and I thank God for you. Countless others we will never meet this side of heaven will thank you as well!

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3 Great Ways to Force Yourself to Be More Grateful (and a Lot Happier)

WRITTEN BY MARC CHERNOFF

Most of us have amazing family members, friends, and other loved ones who love us back. Learn to appreciate what a gift that is. Most of us have good health, which is another gift. Most of us have eyes, with which to enjoy the amazing gifts of sunsets and nature and beauty all around us. Most of us have ears, with which to enjoy music – one of the greatest gifts of them all.

We may not have all these things, because we can't have everything, but we certainly have plenty to be grateful for. To an extent, we know this already, and yet we forget. It happens to the best of us.

Sometimes Angel and I get so caught up pursuing the next big thing that we forget to pause and appreciate the things we have, and the things we've experienced, learned and achieved along the way. And the most tragic part of this is that our happiness takes a major hit.

The Science of Gratitude and Happiness

As human beings, when we aren't grateful for what we have, we aren't capable of being happy.

This is not just some self-improvement cliché either. It's been scientifically proven. For example, researchers in numerous positive psychology studies (like [this one](#)) have split study participants into two groups and instructed one group of study participants to reflect on the little things they are grateful for at the end of each day, while the other group just goes about their normal routines. Then, after several weeks, both groups are interviewed, and it becomes clear that the first group enjoyed considerably greater life satisfaction than the other group during that time period.

Why does this happen?

The simplest explanation is that forcing ourselves to focus on thoughts and actions related to gratitude, regardless of circumstances, helps our brains develop positive emotions. In one notable study, researchers asked participants to smile forcibly while thinking of something specific they're grateful for. They found that this consistently stimulated mental activity associated with positive feelings and emotions.

The bottom line for most of us ([severe depression](#) and other related mental illnesses notwithstanding) is pretty clear: when we force ourselves to be grateful by making gratitude a part of our daily routines, we actually feel a lot happier.

How to Force Yourself to Be More Grateful

In the end, the secret to being grateful is no secret. You choose to be grateful. Then you do it again and again. If you forget, begin again.

There are, however, three specific gratitude strategies that Angel and I often cover with [our students and coaching clients](#). We've literally seen these strategies work wonders for people over the past decade (and we practice them ourselves too). I encourage you to implement them, gradually, one at a time, into your life. And if you need further assistance, [we're here](#).

1. Practice a private, evening gratitude ritual.

Here's a super simple, five-minute, evening gratitude ritual:

Every evening before you go to bed, write down three things that went well during the day and their causes. Simply provide a short, causal explanation for each good thing.

That's it. We spend tens of thousands of dollars on expensive electronics, big homes, fancy cars, and lavish vacations hoping for a boost of happiness. This is a simple, free alternative, and it works.

If you begin this ritual this evening, you just might be looking back on today many years from now, as the day when your whole life changed.

2. Practice giving thanks publicly.

Although gratitude comes from within, the public expression of gratitude is important too. In his best selling book, "[Authentic Happiness](#)," the renowned positive psychologist Martin Seligman gives some practical suggestions on how to do this. He recommends that we ritualize the practice of expressing gratitude in letters to friends, family, coworkers, and other people who we interact with in our community.

Angel and I have put this gratitude strategy into practice in our own lives by ritualizing it into our morning routine. We write a short email, text message, or letter each morning to one specific person, mindfully thanking and praising them for what they do that makes our lives a little brighter. (*Angel and I build mindful gratitude rituals with our students in the "Happiness and Positive Living" module of [Getting Back to Happy](#).*)

3. Practice reflecting on the little things you are grateful for.

It's fairly easy to remember to be grateful for the big and obvious things that happen — a new addition to the family, a great promotion at work, a significant business breakthrough, etc. But the happiest people find ways to give thanks for the little things too. Ponder these perspective-shifting points from [an article I wrote](#) a while back:

- You are alive.
- You didn't go to sleep hungry last night.
- You didn't go to sleep outside.

- You had a choice of what clothes to wear this morning.
- You haven't spent a minute in fear for your life.
- You know someone who loves you.
- You have access to clean drinking water.
- You have access to medical care.
- You have access to the Internet.
- You can read.

Be honest: when was the last time you were grateful for simply being alive, or going to sleep with a full belly? More specifically, think of all the little things you experience — the smell of a home-cooked meal, hearing your favorite song when it randomly comes on the radio, seeing a marvelous sunset, etc.

Pay attention, and be grateful.

Truly, the richest human isn't the one who has the most, but the one who needs less. Wealth is a mindset. Want less and appreciate more today. And remember, the best time to focus on being grateful is when you don't feel like it. Because that's when doing so can make the biggest difference. (*Angel and I discuss this further in the "Happiness" chapter of [1,000 Little Things Happy, Successful People Do Differently](#).*)

As for me, I'm wrapping up this article with a quick note of gratitude to YOU:

Thank you for reading this article and other articles on marcandangel.com.

Thank you for being a part of our community.

Angel and I are truly grateful YOU are here with us.

Your turn...

Right now, I'd love for you to reflect on #3 above...

What's something little you're truly grateful for, that you sometimes forget to appreciate?

