

# THE NARTHEX

The believers were first called Christians at Antioch  
ACTS. 9:26

August- September 2011

## ORA ET LABORA

This edition of The Narthex is published at the start of the holiday season. Already, many of our usual congregation are away for a break. I hope myself to be away for a time but, as far as possible, the Sunday service schedule should be covered. We think of holidays as times of rest and relaxation and a change from the normal round of work. We might note, however, that this humane and salutary arrangement is, in the first place, rooted in religion. The very word in English, of course, means *holy day*. The fundamental concept of a holiday or vacation implies a release, a setting free from the mundane and ordinary, in order to consecrate a time for the spiritual and the extraordinary.

The fourth Mosaic commandment calls for the observing of Shabbat, a sacred day, the last day of the week, Saturday. This is no longer observed in the New Covenant as such, being superseded by the resurrection of Our Lord and our new creation in Him. Sunday has been observed since the days of the Apostles and even legislated for under St. Constantine the Great. As the image of the 'eighth day', Sunday is the perfection of creation and the anticipation of our redemption. Under the Old Covenant, Israel was to work through the days of week and then arrive at Saturday, the Sabbath, as a foretaste of the rest to come. (St. Paul refers to this in 1 Cor.4:1-11) Under the New Covenant, however, we have the fulfilment now. We celebrate not the last but the first day of the week, for the resurrection of Christ, being the final revelation of God to man, declares that we have reached that

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rest; as St. Paul says, our life is now hidden with Christ in God. We have been transferred to the heavenly places. Whilst still in time in this world, our observing of the Lord's Day is a witness that our faith is in the spiritual realities.

There are, of course, many reasons for the religious observance of Sunday. One might cite the social and psychological benefits that come from the regular keeping of ordered time with its chance for rest and relaxation. This, though, is not the principal point of Sunday. Since the days of the Apostles, it is the day we all come together, constituting visibly the very body of Christ on earth. It is not that the Church lays down a day of *obligation* for her people, by way of a kind of statute law, rather, we make the point that there is a serious distinction between those who are merely nominal or cultural Christians and the Faithful who realise the true mystical significance of the Lord's Day and the vital importance of sharing in the Divine Liturgy.

Like much that is good in the Creation, such as the rest we need, it is all too easy for fallen humanity to receive it and corrupt it. Our very physical nature tells us we need sleep, for example but the vice of sloth can draw us into misuse and render us lazy. Our minds need recreation and diversion but the passionate search for sensation and vain pleasure can refocus our lives onto the hedonistic pursuit of self-gratification as a singular but false aim in life. Here, the

salutary provision of a day of rest becomes the whole purpose of life, engineering as a goal the dream of a life free from all work; acquiring as much wealth as possible to make this possible and to spend ones life in utter dissipation. This self-delusory and ultimately self-destructive illusion lies at the heart of many people's reason for living. This is the corrupted, demonically inspired ideal that has degenerated from the originally humane provision for rest. In the Creation story, man is put into the garden to 'till the ground' and work. It is noteworthy that the pagan mythologies imagined a long-lost Golden Age when mankind had no need of work and everyone knew constant leisure. The dream of many is to achieve that life of leisure as if that could be the supreme good in this world.

We, however, are called to something better; a spiritual life that recognises the need for labour whilst in this world yet is founded on hope of the heavenly life, symbolised by the Lord's Day. In the monastic life - a higher and intensified mode of living the life in Christ - the communal day is built around prayer and work (ora et labora) where to labour is to pray and to pray is to work, as St. Benedict says. As a retreat from the business and the relentless busyness of this world; as a liberation from weighty concerns and demanding relationships; as a reduction to the very basic needs of life, the monastic life in Christ is actually very far from being a poor man's version of the life of leisure. It is, in fact, the complete opposite: it is a thorough engagement with this world in a

reordered way. It is a sign on earth to all of us of how to redeem the time. Our calling is not the feverish pursuit of as many pleasures as possible, nor to the ceaseless search for as much wealth as might be had. Our vocation is to labour as for God and, from time to time, to take our rest in order to praise Him.

*Fr. Chrysostom*

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A fisherman was relaxing one afternoon on the beach, enjoying the sun, after his day's work was done. A local businessman came up to him and asked, "Why aren't you out fishing?" "Why should I do that?" he replied. "Well, you could catch more fish!" "Why do I need to catch more fish?" "So you can sell them at the fish market."

"Whatever for?"

"To make more money, of course!"

"Why do I need more money?"

So...you could employ a helper."

Why do I want to do that?"

So you could catch even more fish."

"Why do I need to do that?"

"So you can sell more at the fish market."

"Whatever for?"

"To make more money, of course!"

"Why do I need more money?"

"So you could buy a bigger boat, of course!"

Why do I want to do that?"

So you could catch even more fish."

"Why do I need to do that?"

"So you can sell more at the fish market."

"Whatever for?"

"To make more money, of course!"

"Why do I need to do that?"

"So you could employ a whole team of workers"

"Whatever for?"

"So... they could do your work *for* you."

"Why would I want them to do that?"

"So...then... you could have some free time to relax in the sun, of course."

And, of course, the fisherman replied to the businessman...



My Soul Doth  
Magnify the Lord

*Festival of Flowers  
&  
Exhibition of Icons*



Free Entry

August 12 - 15<sup>th</sup>

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup>

10.00am Paraklesis

11.00am - 4.00pm Preparation  
of the exhibition

4.00pm Vespers

Friday 12<sup>th</sup>

10.00am Paraklesis

11.00am - 4.00pm Exhibition  
Open

4.00pm Vespers

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup>

11.00am Paraklesis

12.00 noon Exhibition Open

4.00pm Vespers

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> 9.00am Matins

10.30am Divine Liturgy

12.00 noon - 3.00pm

Exhibition Open

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> 11.00am Divine

Liturgy for the Feast

12.30pm - 3.00pm Exhibition

Open



**SERVICES**

AUGUST

1<sup>st</sup> Mon BEGINNING OF THE  
DORMITION FAST Parish AGM  
7.00pm

5<sup>th</sup> Fri Eve of the  
Transfiguration Vespers Divine  
Liturgy 7.00pm

7<sup>th</sup> Sun 8<sup>th</sup> after Pentecost  
Divine Liturgy 10.30am  
12<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> Festival of Flowers  
and Exhibition of Icons

14<sup>th</sup> Sun 9<sup>th</sup> after Pentecost  
Divine Liturgy 10.30am

15<sup>th</sup> Mon Divine Liturgy 11.00am

21<sup>st</sup> Sun 10<sup>th</sup> after Pentecost  
Divine Liturgy 10.30am

28<sup>th</sup> Sun 11<sup>th</sup> after Pentecost  
Romanian Liturgy 11.00am (This  
might move to the third Sunday; please  
wait for an announcement)

SEPTEMBER

1<sup>st</sup> Thurs Church New Year

4<sup>th</sup> Sun 12<sup>th</sup> after Pentecost  
Divine Liturgy 10.30am

11<sup>th</sup> Sun 13<sup>th</sup> after Pentecost  
(before the Exaltation of the  
Cross) Divine Liturgy 10.30am

18<sup>th</sup> Sun 14<sup>th</sup> after Pentecost  
(after the Exaltation of the  
Cross) Romanian Liturgy 11.00am

25<sup>th</sup> Sun 15<sup>th</sup> after Pentecost  
Divine Liturgy 10.30am  
NB Some of these times and  
arrangements might be subject to change.  
These will be announced.

*Before Thy Cross we fall down in  
worship, O Master,*



*And Thy holy Resurrection we  
glorify.*