

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH
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BULLETIN OF DECEMBER 9, 2007

SUNDAY/DECEMBER 9th
28th Sunday After Pentecost (Tone 3)
Conception of the Theotokos; Icon
of the "Unexpected Joy"

9:30a.m. Hierarchical Divine Liturgy
With Bishop PETER of Cleveland and Elevation
of Deacon Paul to the Protodeaconate
Festal Lenten Lunch to follow
(no church school classes today)

MONDAY/DECEMBER 10th
9:30a.m. Memorial Service for Ann Kralovich

TUESDAY/DECEMBER 11th
7:00p.m. Compline & Akathist to
St. Spyridon (Dec. 12th);
Confession

WEDNESDAY/DECEMBER 12th
7:00p.m. Vespers; Confession

THURSDAY/DECEMBER 13th
St. Herman of Alaska
9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY/DECEMBER 15th
9:30a.m. Akathist; Confession
5:30p.m. Vigil; Confession

SUNDAY/DECEMBER 16th
Sunday of the Holy Forefathers
(Tone 4)
9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Church School Classes;
11:00a.m. Christmas Cookie Walk
In Upper Hall



Fasting Days of Nativity Lent

Sunday,	Dec. 9th	fish, wine & oil
Monday,	Dec. 10th	
Tuesday,	Dec. 11th	wine & oil
Wednesday,	Dec. 12th	
Thursday,	Dec. 13th	fish, wine & oil
Friday,	Dec. 14th	
Saturday,	Dec. 15th	fish, wine & oil
Sunday,	Dec. 16th	fish, wine & oil



ON THE CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST ON THIS HISTORIC DAY

"And unite all of us to one another who become partakers of the one Bread and Cup in the communion of the Holy Spirit."

- Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

Today we greet and welcome Bishop Peter!

Today we share the One Bread and One Cup with the faithful of St. Elizabeth Church!

Today is a day of joy and unity!

Today we express thanksgiving to God for the well-being of His Holy Church!

Today the divisions of the past are seen to be melted away by the grace of God!

Today we pledge to further the canonical unity of our Orthodox Churches in America!

Nativity Lent

On November 15th, the 40 Day Nativity Fast began. One of the "Four Lents" of the year, we prepare for the Nativity of the Lord, on December 25th with an ascetical work of fasting from meat, dairy, fish, wine and oil. Your parish wall calendar indicates modifications to the Lent.

The Mysteries of Confession & Communion

Should be received by all the faithful during the time of this 40 Day Fast (Nov. 15th-Dec. 24th). Please note in the monthly bulletin the times offered for Confession.

Those That Are Home Bound

Be sure to arrange with Fr. James for a visit to your home for the Holy Mysteries and prayers. Please arrange this during the weeks of Dec. 9th and 16th.

End the Year 2007 in Good Standing

Be sure your \$180 per adult assessment is paid in full by Dec. 31st. To be eligible to participate in the Annual Meeting, vote and hold any parish administrative office, you must be in financial good standing. 2007 assessments must be paid in the calendar year of 2007.

Offerings for the week of Dec. 9th

Olive Oil – in memory of Emilia; in memory of Michael; for protection and healing from God of Gabriela-Antoaneta; in memory of William; for the health of Jeffery (surgery); in honor of St. Spyridon and for the health of Justina; in memory of Joan.

Axios! ("He is Worthy")

To Protodeacon Paul Sokol on his elevation. May the Lord continue to guide him in honorable service to His Holy Church

Parish Synodicon

Dec. 07, 2007 (40th Day) Stephanida Seminuk
Dec. 28, 2007 (40th Day) Archbishop PETER
Dec. 28, 2007 (40th Day) Vera Somoluk
Dec. 09, 1965 Max Horbel
Dec. 09, 1970 Helen Horbel
Dec. 10, 1946 David Gerasmchuk
Dec. 10, 1956 Anthony Pawlik
Dec. 10, 1988 Michael Sofko
Dec. 10, 2004 Ann Kralovich
Dec. 11, 1961 Paul Romanovich
Dec. 12, 1976 Christina Swidonovich
Dec. 14, 1978 Pauline Jackowlew
Dec. 16, 1933 Vladimir Shultz
Dec. 16, 1993 Ann Warin

Parish Educational Classes

Teen Discussion Group (high school students) a brief 20 minute informal discussion to be held on the 2nd Sunday during the Coffee Hour.

Class A (K thru 3rd grade) on the 1st and 3rd Sundays during Coffee Hour.

Class B (4 thru 8 grade) on the 1st, 2nd & 3rd Sundays during Coffee Hour.

General Question & Answer Period on the 4th Sunday during Coffee Hour.

Christmas Cookie Walk – Dec. 16th

A sign-up sheet for making cookies may be found on the vestibule stand. For more information please speak with Terri Filippini.

OCA Charities Appeal

You are asked to use your envelope for this annual offering. Instead of the funds being sent to Syosset, The Parish Council will directly disperse them to persons and charitable causes (due to OCA crisis).

Have You Notified the Rector?

Of any changes in parish membership status, as well as names, addresses, and phone for the new 2008 Parish Directory?

Grace and Peace





OrthodoxyToday.org

Commentary on social and moral issues of the day

Looking for Miracles in All the Wrong Places

Fr. William J. Mills

Sermon on Luke 8:26-39

Throughout the years people have often ask me why we don't have miracles like they did back in Jesus' time. When reading the Bible we encounter many miracles, Moses dividing the Red Sea, Elijah healing the widow's son, Jesus walking on the water, Jesus driving out demons from people, and of course the biggies, such as Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead and then the biggest miracle of all, Jesus' own resurrection. If we read the Bible carefully we will encounter these miracles along with many others

Today when people encounter a miraculous event they usually chalk it up to scientific technology, good medicine, or an act of nature. At 9:00am on the morning of 9/11 many people left their offices in the Twin Towers in order to get coffee and bagels for their co-workers. Five minutes later two jet airplanes flew right into the Towers, killing thousands of people and maiming hundreds more. The survivors considered this a miracle. However, other people say well, it was just a coincidence that they left, after all, coffee runs are usual in big companies.

Just a few weeks ago a man was flying a jet plane and for some reason the plane crashed. The man was found safe and sound sitting in his cockpit in a tree, not even getting a scratch. People said that it was the type of wind sheer that allowed the cockpit to fall gently and safely. However, surely this man sees it as a miracle. Furthermore, a few months ago there was a lady who gave birth to six children who were three months premature. They survived even though they were very small and had little chance of surviving. People also chalk this up to good science. So many things happen to people and we try to "figure it out" citing science, medicine, or nature.

Perhaps these events or situations are God giving us a glimpse of the kingdom of heaven. After all, this is what miracles are anyway, little glimpses into God's rule and authority. However, we miss the power of the message as did the people in the time of Jesus. Not much as changed since then, as the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes says, "there is nothing new under the sun." Then as now people want to be entertained. They had magicians, fortune-tellers, and astrologers and we have circus' and Hollywood with special effects to razzle-dazzle us. Yet, Jesus' was not a magician nor was he trying to entertain people, although many thought they were being entertained. At one point when Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes they wanted to seize him in order to make him a king! They saw his power in human terms, missing the point that Jesus was directing them to the kingdom. Jesus' miracles are a sign of his kingship, but his kingship is not of this world. His power is over disease, nature, and even death. God is the god over all things in creation.

Also, these miracles, like the one we heard today about the demon possessed man are an invitation of faith. Towards the end of the gospel lesson we heard that the once possessed man was found "clothed and in his right mind" sitting at Jesus' feet. This man is the male version of Mary, the one whose sister Martha was busy preparing lunch complaining that her sister Mary wasn't helping her. Yet all the while Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet as an act of faith, learning and listening from her Master.

The gospel of Luke provides us with many miracles of Jesus, the woman who was healed from her flow of blood, the Roman centurion's servant who was ill, and the cleansing of the lepers. These people approached Jesus in faith and they were healed of their disease and discomfort because of their faith; because they came to Jesus for help. And compared to the big miracles that we often think about, the parting of the Red Sea for instance, these miracles in the gospel are quite small, Jesus' really didn't do much, he says a few words and people are restored to health and well-being.

Yet all too often we overlook the hundreds of small miracles in our life, the small glimpses into the kingdom of God because we are too darn busy seeking the big miracles, the walking on water type of miracle. We overlook the many miracles of family members being reconciled to their family after being pushed out or living in self induced exile, the miracle of a restored friendship, and the miracle of life itself. I think we do this because deep down we would rather be entertained and excited and we don't want Jesus interfering in our life. After all, it is a fearful thing when we encounter the Lord. The great crowds in the reading today were afraid because of what Jesus did to the possessed man, they were so afraid that they demanded that Jesus leave them immediately. Often we push Jesus out of our life too because we can't deal with the kingdom, we want to focus on the here and now. How sad, because all the while Jesus was directing these people to the kingdom, offering them the bread of life, and they were satisfied with popcorn and cotton candy, how sad indeed!

Fr. William C. Mills, Ph.D., is the rector of the Nativity of the Holy Virgin Orthodox Church in Charlotte, NC, as well as an adjunct professor of religious studies at Queens University in Charlotte, NC. He is married to Taisia Mills and has two daughters, Hannah and Emma.

Latest book by Fr. Mills:

A Light to the Gentiles is a collection of pastoral reflections on the Scripture readings from the gospel of Luke that are read in the Orthodox Church from mid-September until the feast of the Nativity of our Lord. The gospel of Luke is also read during the preparatory Sundays before Great Lent as well as at the feast of the Ascension and at the commemoration of various saints. The gospel also contains many familiar parables and teachings: the Good Samaritan, the Publican and the Pharisee, the Rich Man and Lazarus, and Zachaeus. Luke reminds us that the gospel is to be proclaimed to the entire world in order to bring the gospel to all peoples and nations. Thus, the gospel of Luke serves as a beacon of light that shines brightly in the world. *A Light to the Gentiles* is an invitation for everyone to read, accept, and obey the Word of God in their lives. This book is a resource for personal and group Bible study, adult education classes, and sermon preparation.

Cyprus priest's war on sex traffickers

Published Date: December 03, 2007

By Sophie Deviller



Standing outside his humble church in Limassol, a popular tourist town on the south coast of Cyprus, Father Savvas Michaelides, with his bushy graying beard and dark robes, could be mistaken for a Russian priest. Few would suspect that he has a 10,000-Cypriot-pound (17,000-euro, 25,000-dollar) bounty on his head after waging a one-man war on the seedy world of sex trafficking which is blighting this Mediterranean island. He has taken up the fight against sexual exploitation on behalf of what he says are the thousands of women forced to work in the country's illegal sex industry. Armed with a fearless frankness and booming voice, he thundered through an explanation of the plight of the young girls from eastern Europe and Africa, forced to work as prostitutes by unscrupulous "cabaret" owners. "The pimps tell them they are coming here to work as dancers or in bars. In truth, they must become prostitutes, and are locked away, sometimes beaten and raped," he said. Most have their passports taken from them, allegedly "for safe keeping" but in reality it is to keep them prisoners.

All this is possible because they are given 'artistes' visas to enter the country by the Cypriot authorities," he said angrily, referring to special permits for working in the entertainment industry. Father Savvas was born in Limassol 60 years ago, leaving for Athens at 19 to study theology. Fascinated by the Orthodox church, the dominant Christian denomination in the region, he sees the church in Russia as the "Mother of Churches", and went to France to learn Russian. He returned to Cyprus to teach theology and only then did he decide to devote his life to the priesthood. "I gave myself time to reflect. I wanted to be sure of my calling," he explained. Today, he works in the island's only Russian Orthodox church, a tiny building with crumbling brickwork, in Limassol.

In the intimate surroundings of his confessional, he learned shocking details of the reality of Cyprus's sex industry. "The women have told me of the horrible things to which they are subjected. I have tried to persuade them to leave the cabaret clubs but I cannot offer them a practical solution," he said. In 2001, a young Russian cabaret worker unwillingly drawn into prostitution plunged five stories to her death in the town. Reports that she had been trying to escape from a locked room drove Father Savvas into action. "It is not enough to speak the word of God, you must also take action," he said. Three years later he was able to open a shelter for victims of sex trafficking.

The refuge is the only one of its type in Cyprus and has helped around 300 victims. "We help them leave prostitution, return home to their own countries or find legal help if they want to make a formal complaint, which is rare because these women are terrorized," he added. With his battered little white car, Father Savvas does not hesitate to go out onto the streets looking for vulnerable young women in the cabarets and confront their

employers face-to-face. Tatiana is a Ukrainian and former sex worker rescued by the priest. "He is the only one who tries to help them. He is hated by the people traffickers but he doesn't let it worry him. He just shrugs it off.

The priest sleeps little, reads a lot and never switches off his mobile telephone. "I like to fish and collect mushrooms, but I have little time for myself," he said. The government provides only 17,000 Euros a year to fund the centre and Father Savvas survives on church offerings and a small state pension, much of which he uses to subsidise the shelter. He blames the Cypriot authorities for failing to ban "artistes" visas, the police for "sometimes closing their eyes" to the problem and the judiciary for being "often too lenient" with criminals. As for the Orthodox church, he regrets that it does not get more involved in the issue. "I do not ask for money, but I wish they would more often offer a helping hand to these women," he said. His crusade presents him with a moral dilemma. "My refuge is not the answer. When I save one woman, two others arrive in their place.

I sometimes think I am actually encouraging trafficking. "We have to pursue prevention by providing information to these women in their own countries." While his rejection of abortion has attracted criticism-he promotes adoption of victims' children-there can be no doubt he is confronting a problem many others chose to ignore. But his efforts are not without sacrifice. Asked about the 10,000 Cypriot pound price he says has been put on his head by underworld bosses, he said, "10,000 pounds? I had thought bravery was a little more highly valued." When asked if he now fears for his life, he simply smiled and pointed to the sky, adding, "I have never been afraid of men, only Him."-AFP



Cancer rate lower for monks

Dietary and lifestyle habits of monks on Mount Athos, northern Greece, have facilitated healthy living and lower cancer rates, according to the results of a survey made public yesterday.

Regular consumption of olive oil in cooking, along with fish and seasonal fruit and vegetables are among the factors keeping the incidence of prostate cancer below international averages, according to data presented by urologist Haralambos Aidonopoulos.

"It is not just the Mediterranean diet that helps but generally a diet consisting of old, traditional standards," said Aidonopoulos.

The study examined hundreds of monks from Mount Athos since 1994 and found that the incidence of prostate cancer was 4.5 times lower than international levels.

In the last 13 years, there have been 11 reported cases of prostate cancer among monks.

Other positive factors were proper sleep patterns and the lack of air pollution, according to the research.