

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH
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BULLETIN OF FEBRUARY 24, 2008

SUNDAY/FEBRUARY 24th
Sunday of the Prodigal Son
(Tone 6)

1st & 2nd Findings of the Head of
St. John the Baptist

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour;
Question & Answer Period

TUESDAY/FEBRUARY 26th
7:00p.m. Vespers

7:45p.m. Informal Discussion at Rectory

WEDNESDAY/FEBRUARY 27th
St. Raphael, Bishop of Brooklyn
9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy

FRIDAY/FEBRUARY 29th
7:00p.m. General Memorial Service for
Departed; Confessions
(**Memorial Saturday**)

SATURDAY/MARCH 1st
5:30p.m. Compline

SUNDAY/MARCH 2nd
Meat-Fare Sunday (Tone 7)
9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour; Church School
12:00p.m.-2:30p.m. Spaghetti Dinner

Meat-Fare Sunday

March 2nd, this is the last day we partake of
meat products until Holy Pascha, April 27th.

Cheese-Fare Sunday

March 9th, this is the last day we partake of
dairy products until Holy Pascha, April 27th.

Pure Monday

March 10th, the Beginning of the 40 Day Great
and Holy Fast



AN INSTRUCTION OF ST. THEOPHAN
THE RECLUSE (+1894)

The Conscience

Yes, we are seen by a countless number of eyes – the saints and angels of heaven. See how many stars there are in sky! The number of eyes that look at us is greater still.

Indeed, we ourselves are able, if not to see, then to determine what we are. Our conscience, the incorruptible judge, tells us. It may become suppressed with time, but it always manages to free itself from this yoke, and raises its voice even in those who are shameless. In those who are innocent, its voice is always pure and like a bell.

The conscience is also known as the divine voice in the human spirit. In it is also reflected whatever opinion or view the inhabitants of heaven see us. Thus, when the conscience says we are pure in everything before God and man, then this testimony of the conscience reflects the light near our soul, and everyone in heaven sees us as bright.

If the conscience reproaches us, however, telling us that we are impure, then we appear dark. But the Guardian Angels are closer to us than anyone, and they know who is dark and who is bright, and are able to judge by the inner attitude whether it is a permanent or temporary condition.

Informal Discussion

This Tuesday, Feb. 26th at 7:45p.m. This is an opportunity for you to ask, listen, share, comment, etc. on matters of the Faith and life in general with Fr. James and other parishioners in the rectory.

Spaghetti Dinner – Sunday, March 2nd

This dinner will be held at our parish center by the Ways & Means Committee from 12:00noon to 2:30p.m. Reserve the date. At the dinner, you may purchase pirohi (not cooked) to bring home.

Pirohi Making

Monday, Feb. 25th - morning

Monday, Feb. 25th - evening

Tuesday, Feb. 26th – evening

Offerings for the week of Feb. 24th

Olive Oil - in memory of Joan; in memory of Emilia; for the health of Eugenia; in memory of Michael; for the health of Justina; for the health of Protodeacon Paul (birthday); in memory of John Lapchuk.

Wine – for the health of Vaschen (birthday); in memory of Helen and Joseph.

Flowers – in memory of John.

The Annual Meeting was Held Feb. 17th

The Meeting was productive and positive. Thanks to all who took the time to come and participate. If you have not read the Reports, please do so, they may be picked-up in the church vestibule (blue covered sheet). It is vital for all of our parishioners to know what constitutes our common parish life and to be part of the building up of our community.

The New Parish Council

Will be installed on Sunday, Mar. 23rd at the Divine Liturgy.

The next Parish Council Meeting is Mar. 27th Thursday at 7:00p.m.

Commemoration Books

When and if possible, please set them out the evening before a Divine Liturgy.

Parish Synodicon – Memory Eternal!

Mar. 01, 1962 Constantine Bobich

Mar. 02, 1917 George Bekzar

Mar. 02, 1919 Peter Palomar

Mar. 02, 1994 Traiko Josifovich

Mar. 02, 2005 Helen Rzeszowski

Mar. 03, 1953 Xenia Kozich

Mar. 03, 1961 Pauline Leich

Mar. 03, 1962 Joseph Legedza

Mar. 03, 1969 Father Theodore Labowsky
(Rector 1962-1969)

Mar. 03, 1970 Samuel Savastinuk

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.

No classes on the 5th Sunday of the month.

Boiled Wheat for the Divine Services

Mar. 14th, Friday for Theodore Saturday

Mar. 22nd, Memorial Saturday

Mar. 29th, Memorial Saturday

Apr. 5th, Memorial Saturday

If you wish to prepare the wheat for any of these days, please let Father James know.

St. Raphael, Bishop of Brooklyn (+1915)

Feast Day: Mar. 27th (Tone 1)

Your proclamation has gone forth throughout
North America/

Calling the scattered sheep into the unity of the
Church/

And hearing your voice, they responded to your
teaching/

And through your writings you instructed them
in piety/

Now guided by your example, O Father Raphael /

We sing hymns of praise to Christ our God:/

Glory to Him Who gave you strength! /

Glory to Him Who granted you a crown! ///

Glory to Him Who, through you, grants
healing to all!

ON PRAYER

Q. What is Christian prayer?

A. It is our communication with God, in which we express our Faith, Hope and Love.

Q. What kinds of prayer do we use?

A. Four kinds:

- (a) Inward prayer
- (b) Outward prayer
- (c) Private prayer
- (d) Public prayer.

Q. What is inward and what is outward prayer?

A. Inward prayer is also called mental prayer. It is done in silence; outward prayer is said aloud.

Q. How often should we pray?

A. It depends on how much we love our God. The more we love Him the oftener we are in prayerful communication with Him. The perfect ones are constantly praying to God, according to Christ's word: "Men ought always to pray" (Luke 18:1).

Q. How is it possible to pray always?

A. It is possible to pray always mentally or inwardly. We can offer to God our inaudible prayers even while traveling or working, praising Him, thanking Him and invoking His help.

Q. What is the shortest mental prayer?

A. "O Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me!"

Q. What is private and what is public prayer?

A. When a person prays by himself, either mentally or audibly, it is called private prayer. When he joins other people for prayer either in the church or in some other place, this is called public prayer.

Q. Which of these are obligatory for every Christian?

A. All of them are obligatory for every Christian. We ought to pray secretly within ourselves and also openly and audibly. And we ought to pray alone, wherever we are, and we ought to pray together with other Christians in Church. The saints did the same.

Q. What should be the leading ideas in every regular prayer?

A. Every regular prayer usually has three parts: thanksgiving, petition and glorification. First, we give thanks to God for what we already have received from Him; second, we ask from Him what we actually need, and third, we glorify and praise His goodness, power and glory.



Bishop Hilarion Alfeyev: Liberal Christianity will not survive for a long time

Intervention at the opening session of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, Geneva, 13 February 2008

I would like to draw your attention to the danger of liberal Christianity. The liberalization of moral standards, initiated by some Protestant and Anglican communities several decades ago and developing with ever-increasing speed, has now brought us to a situation where we can no longer preach one and the same code of moral conduct. We can no longer speak about Christian morality, because moral standards promoted by 'traditional' and 'liberal' Christians are markedly different, and the abyss between these two wings of contemporary Christianity is rapidly growing.

We are being told by some allegedly Christian leaders, who still bear the titles of Reverends and Most Reverends, that marriage between a woman and a man is no longer the only option for creating a Christian family, that there are other patterns, and that the church must be 'inclusive' enough to recognize alternative lifestyles and give them official and solemn blessing. We are being told that human life is no longer an unquestionable value, that it can be summarily aborted in the womb, or that one may have the right to interrupt it voluntarily, and that Christian 'traditionalists' should reconsider their standpoints in order to be in tune with modern developments. We are being told that abortion is agreeable, contraception is agreeable, and euthanasia is better still, and that the church must accommodate all these 'values' in the name of human rights.

What, then, is left of Christianity? In the confusing and disoriented world in which we live, where is the prophetic voice of Christians? What can we offer, or can we offer anything at all to the secular world, apart from what the secular world will offer to itself as a value system on which society should be built? Do we have our own value system which we should preach, or should we simply applaud every novelty in public morality which becomes fashionable in the secular society?

I would also like to draw your attention to the danger of a 'politically correct' Christianity, of a Christianity which not only so easily and readily surrenders itself to secular moral standards, but also participates in promoting value systems alien to Christian tradition.

We are facing a paradoxical situation. British secular politicians who share Christian convictions are concerned about the rising Christianophobia in the UK and initiate a debate on this issue in Parliament, calling for recognition of the country's Christian identity. At the same time the primate of the Church of England calls for 'a constructive accommodation with some aspects of Muslim law.'

I am sure I will be told that Christianity must become more tolerant and all-inclusive, that we Christians should no longer insist on our religion as being the only true faith, that we should *learn how to adopt other value systems and standards*. My question, however, is: when are we going to stop making Christianity politically correct and all-inclusive; why do we insist on accommodating every possible alternative to the centuries-old Christian tradition? Where is the limit, or is there no limit at all?

Many Christians worldwide look to Christian leaders in the hope that they will defend Christianity against the challenges that it faces. It is not our task to defend Sharia law, or to commend alternative lifestyles or to promote secular values. Our holy mission is to preach what Christ preached, to teach what the apostles taught and to propagate what the holy Fathers propagated. It is this witness which people are expecting of us.

I am convinced that liberal Christianity will not survive for a long time. A politically correct Christianity will die. We see already how liberal Christianity is falling apart and how the introduction of new moral norms leads to division, discord and confusion in some Christian communities. This process will continue, while traditional Christians, I believe, will consolidate their forces in order to protect the faith and moral teaching which the Lord gave, the Apostles preached and the Fathers preserved.

Does Balkanization Beckon Anew?

by Patrick J. Buchanan

When the Great War comes, said old Bismarck, it will come out of "some damn fool thing in the Balkans."

On June 28, 1914, Gavrilo Princip shot the archduke and heir to the Austrian throne Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo, setting in motion the train of events that led to the First World War.

In the spring of 1999, the United States bombed Serbia for 78 days to force its army out of that nation's cradle province of Kosovo. The Serbs were fighting Albanian separatists of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). And we had no more right to bomb Belgrade than the Royal Navy would have had to bombard New York in our Civil War.

We bombed Serbia, we were told, to stop the genocide in Kosovo. But there was no genocide. This was propaganda. The United Nations' final casualty count of Serbs and Albanians in Slobodan Milosevic's war did not add up to 1 percent of the dead in Mr. Lincoln's war.

Albanians did flee in the tens of thousands during the war. But since that war's end, the Serbs of Kosovo have seen their churches and monasteries smashed and vandalized and have been ethnically cleansed in the scores of thousands from their ancestral province. In the exodus they have lost everything. The remaining Serb population of 120,000 is largely confined to enclaves guarded by NATO troops.

"At a Serb monastery in Pec," writes the Washington Post, "Italian troops protect the holy site, which is surrounded by a massive new wall to shield elderly nuns from stone-throwing and other abuse by passing ethnic Albanians."

On Sunday, Kosovo declared independence and was recognized by the European Union and President Bush. But this is not the end of the story. It is only the preface to a new history of the Balkans, a region that has known too much history.

By intervening in a civil war to aid the secession of an ancient province, to create a new nation that has never before existed and, to erect it along ethnic, religious and tribal lines, we have established a dangerous precedent. Muslim and Albanian extremists are already talking of a Greater Albania, consisting of Albania, Kosovo and the Albanian-Muslim sectors of Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia.

If these Albanian minorities should demand the right to secede and join their kinsmen in Kosovo, on what grounds would we oppose them? The inviolability of borders? What if the Serb majority in the Mitrovica region of northern Kosovo, who reject Albanian rule, secede and call on their kinsmen in Serbia to protect them?

Would we go to war against Serbia, once again, to maintain the territorial integrity of Kosovo, after we played the lead role in destroying the territorial integrity of Serbia?

Inside the U.S.-sponsored Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the autonomous Serb Republic of Srpska is already talking secession and unification with Serbia. On what grounds would we deny them?

The U.S. war on Serbia was unconstitutional, unjust and unwise. Congress never authorized it. Serbia, an ally in two world wars, had never attacked us. We made an enemy of the Serbs, and alienated Russia, to create a second Muslim state in the Balkans.

By intervening in a civil war where no vital interest was at risk, the United States, which is being denounced as loudly in Belgrade today as we are being cheered in Pristina, has acquired another dependency. And our new allies, the KLA, have been credibly charged with human trafficking, drug dealing, atrocities and terrorism.

And the clamor for ethnic self-rule has only begun to be heard.

Rumania has refused to recognize the new Republic of Kosovo, for the best of reasons. Bucharest rules a large Hungarian minority in Transylvania, acquired at the same Paris Peace Conference of 1919 where Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina were detached from Vienna and united with Serbia.

Abkhazia and South Ossetia, two provinces that have broken away from Georgia, are invoking the Kosovo precedent to demand recognition as independent nations. As our NATO expansionists are anxious to bring Georgia into NATO, here is yet another occasion for a potential Washington-Moscow clash.

Spain, too, opposed the severing of Kosovo from Serbia, as Madrid faces similar demands from Basque and Catalan separatists.

The Muslim world will enthusiastically endorse the creation of a new Muslim state in Europe at the expense of Orthodox Christian Serbs. But Turkey is also likely to re-raise the issue as to why the EU and United States do not formally recognize the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Like Kosovo, it, too, is an ethnically homogeneous community that declared independence 25 years ago.

Breakaway Transnistria is seeking independence from Moldova, the nation wedged between Rumania and Ukraine, and President Putin of Russia has threatened to recognize it, Abkhazia and South Ossetia in retaliation for the West's recognition of Kosovo.

If Putin pauses, it will be because he recognizes that of all the nations of Europe, Russia is high among those most threatened by the serial Balkanization we may have just reignited in the Balkans.

The Russian Orthodox Church is at one with Serbs

Moscow, February 19, Interfax – The Russian Orthodox Church expressed its solidarity with Orthodox believers in Serbia on declaration of Kosovo's independence.

"We share grief and sufferings of Serbian people who are deprived of a historical part of their country connected with the history of spiritual, cultural and national life of Serbian people," head of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad has said at an *Interfax* press conference.

He added he was an opponent of force decision of the problem. 'Russia had radically reacted to the Balkans events in 1914 and then we lost our own country,' the metropolitan said.

"We are in sympathy with Serbian people, with the Serbian Church. We must find the way and funds to express our solidarity. It's absolutely clear that Russia's sympathy exceeds sympathy of any other country. Russia has expressed its solidarity with Serbian people and continues to do it," he stressed.

Metropolitan Kirill also said that the Russian Orthodox Church backs up the position of the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church and would make an official statement on situation in Kosovo. According to him, separation of Kosovo from Serbia may prompt a further parade of sovereignties worldwide.

"If under some circumstances the principle which underlies all international relations can be reviewed and dismantled in one case, then there will certainly be a temptation to review and dismantle it in another case," the DECR head said.

He shares the opinion that "an abnormal event" has taken place in the history of international relations. "This is a truly historical event in a sense that we will count the European and world history before and after Kosovo," he said.

According to him, "the well-established international consensus has been broken."

Metropolitan Kirill noted that the whole international policy was built around unity and territorial integrity, and it was this principle, which formed the foundation of the Helsinki process.

"This principle has been broken right before our eyes," the Moscow Patriarchate official said.

Islamic states bloc welcomes Kosovo independence

Reuters - Tuesday, February 19 06:43 am

RIYADH (Reuters) - The Organisation of the Islamic Conference has welcomed Kosovo's declaration of independence, saying it would be an asset to the Muslim world.

"Kosovo has finally declared its independence after a long and determined struggle by its people. As we rejoice in this happy result, we declare our solidarity with and support to our brothers and sisters there," Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, the head of the OIC, said at the opening of a meeting in Dakar on Monday.

"The Islamic (nation) wishes them success in the new battle awaiting them, which is the building of a strong and prosperous state capable of satisfying its people. There is no doubt that the independence of Kosovo will be an asset to the Muslim world and further enhance joint Islamic action," he said in comments sent to Reuters.

Kosovo Albanians declared independence on Sunday, the latest drama in the tortuous break-up of Serb-dominated Yugoslavia that began nearly two decades ago. Most Albanians are Muslims.

The majority Albanian territory, once ruled as a part of Serbia, has been under United Nations supervision since 1999, when NATO bombing forced a withdrawal of Serb forces that had been attacking Albanians in the province.

China, Russia, Spain, Serbia and other countries have opposed the move, some saying it will encourage separatism.