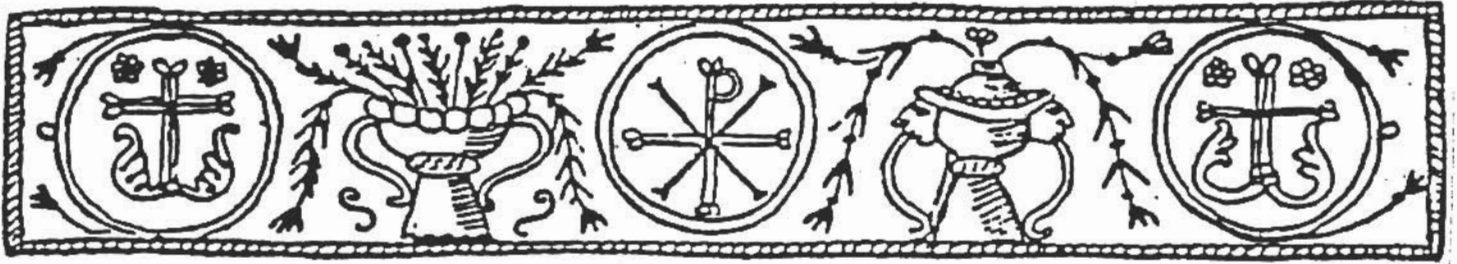


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Bulletin of May 25, 2008

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!



SUNDAY/MAY 25th

**5th Sunday of Pascha: The Samaritan
3rd Finding of the Head of the Baptist**
9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour;
Question & Answer Period

MONDAY/MAY 26th

Pilgrimage to the Monastery of St. Tikhon in
South Canaan, PA.

WEDNESDAY/MAY 28th

7:00p.m. Vespers
7:45p.m. Lemonade & Informal Discussion

THURSDAY/MAY 29th

**St. Luke Archbishop & Physician
Of Crimea**

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

SATURDAY/MAY 31st

9:30a.m. Akathist; Confession
5:30p.m. Vigil; Confession

SUNDAY/JUNE 1st

**6th Sunday of Pascha: The Blind Man
St. Justin the Philosopher**

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

Church School; Book-for-the-Month of Spiritual
Reading from Parish Library

Fasting Days

Wednesday, May 28th (wine & oil allowed)
Friday, May 30th (wine & oil allowed)

The "Unbreakable Spiritual Law"

The Venerable St. Seraphim of Sarov (+1834) was once asked what is lacking in a person that he fails in his spiritual efforts. The Saint responded, "Just one thing" he said, "a firm resolve." Yet, another great saint of the land of Rus, St. Theophan the Recluse (+1894) when asked the same questions said: "In every aspect of the spiritual life – prayer, fasting, reading of the Scriptures, keeping of the commandments, discovering the Will of God and all else – you will achieve nothing by your own efforts alone; yet God will not give you anything unless you work with all your strength. This is an unbreakable spiritual law."

St. Macarius the Great (+390) says this about spiritual effort: "To struggle, yes, to continue to fight, to inflict blows, and to receive setbacks is in your power. To uproot, however, belongs to God alone. If you could have done it on your own, what would have been the need for the coming of the Lord? For just as an eye cannot see without light, nor can one speak without a tongue, nor hear without ears, nor walk without feet, nor carry on works without hands, so you cannot be saved without Jesus nor enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

**And unto us He has given
Eternal life,**

**Let us worship His
Resurrection on the third day!**

Open Door Ministry Is Operating

On Sundays after the Coffee Hour when the weather is nice, we wish to keep the doors of our church "Open," so those passing by may see and come in. This opens out our beautiful church and Orthodox Faith. Greeters are sought to stay in the church and greet any visitors that may drop in. Please speak with Reader Symeon Combs.

Annual Parish Cemetery Care Envelope

Our parish is blessed to have a cemetery and one that is beautiful and in good order. The cemetery may "be out of sight" from us but it is that "part of our parish" whose members have gone before us on the path of life and remain united with us in the One Body of the Church. Prayer for the departed and tending to their place of repose are expressions of our unity, faith and love.

Cemetery Care Envelopes are available on the vestibule stand.

The Parish Community of St. Elizabeth of Rocky Hill are in Residence

For the next couple of months, St. Elizabeth's Parish will be utilizing our upper hall for divine services while their church is undergoing major work. We are pleased to be of service to Father David Straut and his community and welcome them.

The Upper Hall for the months of June and July will be used exclusively for church services.

Sunday Divine Liturgy 9:30a.m.

Saturday Vigil 6:00p.m.

Yes, it is quite alright for our parishioners to make a "visit" and participate in their divine services.

Ascension Thursday – June 4th (One of "the 12 Great Feasts of the Year")

All the faithful should strive to be at the divine services on this Great Feast. Wednesday, June 4th, 6:00p.m. Vigil (in Upper Hall with the Parish of St. Elizabeth). Thursday, June 4th, 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy.

Parish Synodicon – Memory Eternal!

Genevieve Tindall (40th Day/June 7th)

May 27, 1977 Julian Sudillo

May 27, 1988 Tatiana Shvridrik

May 28, 1970 Mary Szwhala

May 29, 1942 Elizabeth Bulat

May 29, 1953 Emil Wilhousky

May 30, 1939 Dominick Stokolovsky

May 30, 1949 Anna Kuchner

May 30, 1963 William Marchisian

May 31, 1963 Michael Dziga

June 01, 1961 Alex Horbel

June 02, 1929 John Senko

June 02, 1951 Wasyl Bondarenko



The 50 Day Celebration: Pascha to Pentecost (April 27th – June 15th)

During this festal period we are forbidden to kneel or make prostrations either in church or in our homes, as we joyfully celebrate the Resurrection of Christ.

Offerings for the week of May 25th

Olive Oil – in memory of Emilia; in memory of Joan; in memory of Michael; for the health of Matthew (birthday); for the health of Vaschen.

Wine - for the health of Basil & Barbara Kulick (anniversary); for the health of Justina.

Flowers – for the health of Kachek family.

Namesday Greetings

St. Theodosia/May 29th: Tessie Nevitt; Many Blessed Years!

Remember in Prayer

Michael Warin (Overlook Hospital).

A Hand-Painted Icon of All Saints of America has been commissioned

This Icon being written by Austin Kachek will have all 14 Saints of the America depicted. It will be a beautiful large icon to honor our saints.

The feast day of the American Saints this year is June 29th.

Contributions are sought, mark an envelope "American Saints Icon." It would be wonderful if all of our parishioners offered something. The cost of the icon is \$1,250.



CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST
By St. Nicholas of Zicha (+1956)

The first question: How can it be said that the Risen Lord has conquered death, When men still die?

They who come into this world through their mother's womb will leave it through death and the grave. This is the rule. Only death for us who died in Christ is no longer a dark abyss, but is birth into new life and a return to our homeland. The grave is, for us, no longer an eternal darkness but a gateway at which God's resplendent angels await us. For all who are filled with love for the beautiful and living Lord, the grave has become only the last obstacle to His presence – and this obstacle is as weak as a spider's web. And so the glorious Apostle Paul cries: *For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.* (Philippians 1:21)

How has the Lord not conquered death, when death is no more visible in His presence? The grave is no more a deep abyss, because He has filled it with Himself; neither is the grave dark any more, for it marks, not the end but the beginning; neither is it our eternal homeland, but only the door to that homeland.

The difference between death before Christ's Resurrection and after it is like the difference between a terrible conflagration and the flame of a candle. Christ's victory is fundamental and therefore, through Him, *death is swallowed up in victory* (1 Corinthians 15:54)

The second question: How can it be said that the Risen Lord has conquered sin, When men still sin?

The Lord has indeed conquered sin. He conquered it by His sinless conception and birth; then by His pure and sinless life on earth; then by His suffering on the Cross, being righteous; and finally He crowned this conquest by His glorious Resurrection. He became the medicine, the appropriate and infallible medicine against sin. He who is infected by sin can only be healed by Christ. He who wants not to sin can only with Christ's help make this desire a reality. When men found a cure for smallpox, they said: we have conquered this disease. They said the same thing when they found a cure for tonsillitis, toothache, gout and other similar illnesses: we have conquered them! The finding of a cure for an illness, then, means the conquering of it.



Christ is by far the greatest Physician in human history, for He brought men the cure for the sickness beyond all sicknesses – for sin, from which all other sicknesses and all man's other sufferings, both physical and spiritual are born. This medicine is He Himself, the Risen and Living Lord. He is the one and only effective Medicine for sin. If men, Even today, sin and, and by sinning, come to ruin, this does not mean that Christ did not conquer sin, but only that the men in question have not taken the one and only medicine against their mortal sickness; it means either

that they do not sufficiently know Christ as the Medicine or if they know the Lord, they do not make use of Him for one reason or another. But history testifies, with thousand upon thousand of voices, that those who make use of this medicine for their souls and take it into their bodies, are healed and made whole. Knowing the weakness of our being, the Lord Christ intended it for the faithful, for them to take Him as food and drink under the visible forms of bread and wine. This, the Lover of Mankind did out of His immeasurable love for men, simply in order to facilitate their approach to the life-giving medicine for sin and for the corruption brought about by sin. *He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood, dwells in me and I in him...and He shall live by me* (John 6:56-57).

Those who sin feed on sin, and the life that is in them is gradually lost through sin. Those, though, who feed on the living Lord, feed on life and the life within them increases more and more, and death decreases. And as much as life is increased, so much is sin decreased. The insipid and gloomy sweetness of sin is replaced in them by the joyful and life-giving sweetness of Christ the Victor.

Blessed are they who have tested and experienced this mystery in their lives. They can be called the sons of light and children of grace. When they pass from this life, they will, as it were, leave the hospital, being no longer sick men.



***Christ is Risen from the dead, trampling down death by death,
And upon those in the tombs, bestowing life!***

Upon those in the tombs...has at the very same time two meanings, for the Resurrection of Christ destroys sin and death. If we be in the tomb of sin, we are brought out; if we be in the tomb of death, we will be brought out.

This is made manifest in the Gospel of John (5:25)...“the hour is coming and now is, when the dead (those in sin) will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.” This is a reference to the “first resurrection,” which is the resurrection of the soul from sin. “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all those who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth” (verses 28-29). This refers to the future or “second resurrection,” which is that of the body.

The immediate resurrection we experience and the first benefit of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, is that of the soul being raised from the deadness of sin. The nature of the “second resurrection” whether it will be for “the resurrection of life” (5:29) of “the resurrection of condemnation” (5:29), is dependent upon what is our experience of being raised now from sin.

So, when we sign the hymn, “Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death and upon those in the tombs bestowing life” – we the living are being raised from sin and the biologically dead, will be raised; the fruitfulness of the Resurrection of Christ is beneficial for both the living and the dead; and for the present age and the age to come.

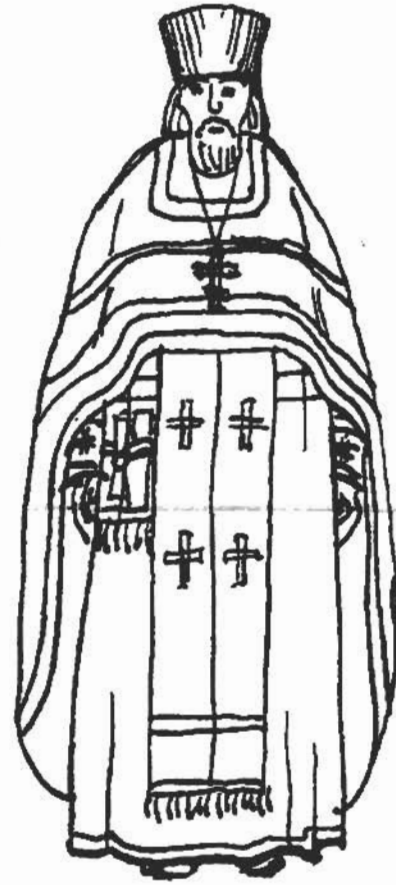
What To Do About A Bad Priest

From *The Letters of St. Theophan the Recluse*

Question: "We had a good priest; but he was transferred to another parish. In his place came another, who is a grief to the soul. In his serving the services, he is careless and hurried; when conversations occur, he talks only about trivial things; if he starts to talk about the things of God, then it is all with a kind of limitation and truncation of the strict truth. How is one to escape from such a temptation?"

Answer: You yourselves are at fault. You made poor use of the good priest, and the Lord took him away. Tell me, did you become better from your previous good priest? Here you falter to say, "Yes." But I from a distance shall say that you did not become better, judging by the fact that you are judging the new priest, not knowing how to control your feelings in relation to him as you should. Indeed, you had a good priest even before this good priest who has now departed from you, and the one before him was good too. You see how many good priests the Lord has sent you; but you all have not become any better for it. And here He has decided: why waste good priests on these people? I'll send them one not so good. And He did. Seeing this, you should have at once paid attention to yourself, to repent and improve, but you just judge and keep judging over and over again. Improve yourselves, and then the priest will at once be changed. He will think: "With these people I cannot carry out my holy work carelessly; I must serve reverently and conduct edifying conversations." And he will mend his ways. If priests are negligent and hurried in serving the services and are trivial in conversations, then most of the time it comes from conforming to the parishioners.

Saying this, I am not justifying the priest. He has no excuse, if he tempts the souls entrusted to him not only with action against the *ustav* but even unwise action according to the *ustav*.¹ But I say only what is more useful for you to do in the given case. And the most important thing I have already said: do not judge, but pay attention to yourselves and improve yourself both in prayer and in conversation, and in all your behavior. Pray for this with all your heart, that the Lord will correct the priest. And He will correct him. Only pray properly. The Lord said, that if two agree about anything and will begin to pray, then



they will have their request (Matt. 18:19). So all you right-thinking parishioners gather together and decide to pray for the priest; join fasting to your prayer and redouble your almsgiving; and do this not just for a day or two, but for weeks, months, a year. Labor and afflict yourself with brokenness so long as the priest has not changed. And he will change; be certain that he will.

I recently heard about a similar *podvig* and its fruit. One old woman, a simple peasant, a deeply pious woman, noticed that someone she respected had begun to depart some from his customary strictness of life, and she began to be sick at heart for him. She came home, locked herself in her hut, and began to pray after she had said to the Lord: "I will not leave this place, or taste a crumb of bread, or drink a drop of water, or give my eyes a minute of sleep until Thou hearest me, O Lord, and hast turned this person back to his former ways." She did just as she had decided: she labored in prayer and afflicted herself with broken-hearted tears importuning the Lord to hear her. Already she had become fatigued, already her strength had begun to leave her; but she all over again prayed: "Though I die,

I will not give this up until the Lord hears me." And He did. The confirmation came to her that this man for whom she was praying had again begun to keep himself as of old. She ran to have a look, saw that it was so, and broke into rejoicing. Her grateful tears had no end. And so this is the kind of prayer you are to establish—although not such in form, because, perhaps, for you it would not be suitable to do as she did—but such in zeal, self-sacrifice, and persistence. And undoubtedly you will receive what you desire. If you will sometimes say, "Grant, Lord, that He may become good" only in passing, whether at home, or in church, or during conversations, then what sort of fruit is to be expected from such prayer? For this is not prayer, but words only.

I have said the main thing to you. I should add still one thing more; but it is the sort thing that is most difficult to carry out in such a way that it achieves its aim. Here is what I think! It may be possible for you who are right-thinking and respected to come to the priest and ask him to change in his actions that which incites you and leads you into temptation. To do this—there is nothing simpler; but to do it in such a way that it bears fruit is difficult in the extreme. Everything must breathe with the most sincere and zealous love—not only the content of what you say, but even your glance, and expression, and tone of voice. Then it may be hoped that this will achieve its aim. But without this love, it is better not to undertake such a step: it will come out worse, produce the most sorrowful discord. One

could, perhaps, write everything to him in like manner, but, again, the whole matter must be carried off in the spirit of all-conquering love. It is also as possible to spoil the whole matter by this means just as it is by personally appearing to the priest. This is why I am not unconditionally decided to recommend this approach. I know, that it may be crowned with success, but the main thing is proper execution. Many good people will be found to come to the priest or to write him without seeing him and to express everything in the most polite manner, but for success, something other than gentleness is needed. Gentleness without love is a wounding sting. I know that in other places they act in this way and then boast: "We have done our part!" But I shall say, that it had been better had they not done it.

I shall not say anything more to you about this—maybe just one thing more: be patient. There are still other legal means; but they are not my field, and I shall be silent about them.

Translated by Fr. Justin Frederick

Endnotes:

¹ *Ustav* in the Orthodox Church refers to the rules that govern how the services of the Church are to be served.

² *Podvig* is a Russian word used to describe a difficult ascetic labor voluntarily undertaken out of love for Christ for spiritual benefit.



Many hundreds of years ago a very holy old man lived in a desert. One day people came to him and said: "Father, teach us, how can we come closer to God while we live in this world?" The old man drew a circle in the sand at his feet. "This circle is the world," he said "and here in the center of it is God. Each one of us lives in the world," and he made dots around the edge of the circle. "As we try to come closer to God, we draw closer to each other and this is the only way in which we can come closer to God. Remember it."