

SS. PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH
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BULLETIN OF SEPTEMBER 28, 2008



Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal

SUNDAY/SEPTEMBER 28th
15th Sunday After Pentecost (Tone 6)
St. Vyacheslav, Prince of the Czechs
9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour; Outreach Presentation at Coffee
Hour

*Then shall Thou be pleased with the
sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt
offerings and whole burnt offerings*

-Psalm 50:19

TUESDAY/SEPTEMBER 30th
7:00p.m. Vespers

There is a difference between a "whole-burnt" offering and a "sacrifice," because every whole-burnt offering is a sacrifice but not every sacrifice is a whole-burnt offering.

WEDNESDAY/OCTOBER 1st
Protection of the Holy Theotokos
9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy

For there are many good deeds which are done as sacrifices but they are not whole-burnt offerings, because they do not kindle the whole mind with spiritual love.

SATURDAY/OCTOBER 4th
9:30a.m. Akathist; Confessions
5:30p.m. Vigil; Confessions

SUNDAY/OCTOBER 5th
16th Sunday After Pentecost (Tone 7)
Synaxis of the Hierarchs of Moscow
9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour; Church School Classes

For those who devote themselves to the things which are of God in such a way that they still do not relinquish certain things which belong to the world, truly make a sacrifice but not a whole-burnt offering. But those who abandon all that belongs to the world and set the whole of their mind alight with the fire of divine love, these truly become a sacrifice and a whole-burnt offering to the Lord Almighty.

Fasting Days
Wednesday, October 1st
Friday, October 3rd

-St. Gregory Dialogist (+604)

Scripture Study Classes – Tuesdays in October 7-8:30p.m.

On the four Tuesday evenings in the Conference Room a Study on part of St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 4:25-32 will be held. This section of the Epistle speaks about members of the Faith relating to one another. All are invited!

Tues. Oct. 7th *Trouble in Ephesus*

Tues. Oct. 14th *Baptism, Truth, Members of One Another*

Tues. Oct. 21st *Conflict – Be angry but do not Sin*

Tues. Oct. 28th *Honor the Spirit – Honor the New Life in Christ*

Namesday Greetings

Protection of Theotokos/Oct. 1st: Mary Rosocha, Marie Turri, Pamela Oliver;

St. Justina/Oct. 2nd: Justina Dao;

St. Dionysius/Oct. 4th: Dennis Fedechko;

Many Blessed years!

Youth Group Bake Sale – Oct. 12th

Re-scheduled from Oct. 5th. Bakers are sought.

The Bake Sale will be held during Coffee Hour.

If you plan to bake, please let Maria Torrisi know (732-454-5642).

Offerings for the Week of Sept. 28th

Olive Oil – in memory of Michael and Justina;

For the health of Marie (birthday); for the health of Jeffery Alexander (birthday); in memory of Emilia; for the health of Vaschen; in memory of Anna Motoviloff.

Wine - in memory of Joan.

Parishioners That Are Home Bound

Are asked to arrange with Father James a schedule for visitations. It is suggested, that all parishioners that cannot come to the church services and are home bound be visited at least once a month.

Remember in Prayer

Anastasia Barna, Theodora Combs, Alexandra Tereby, Richard Nevitt.

Outreach Committee Meeting

Monday, October 13th at 7:00p.m.

Parish Synodicon – Memory Eternal!

October 06, 1961 Michael Gorobetz

October 06, 1963 Daniel Victorenko

October 07, 1934 Josephine Vasevich

October 07, 1948 Ann Cook

October 07, 1961 Mary Rechetnikoff

October 09, 1923 Nicholas Makovsky

October 09, 1945 Mary Zydiak

October 10, 1917 Elizabeth Tkach

October 10, 1926 Francis Bongrost

October 10, 1947 Fr. Michael Lototsky
(Rector 1935-1946)

October 11, 1961 Mary Lebedz

October 11, 1969 Anna Evaniec

October 11, 1978 Jacob Barnosky

Wednesday Parish E-Mail

This past Wednesday and ever Wednesday from here on in, a mid-week e-mail is being sent to parishioners and friends of the parish. The purpose is to "keep in touch," and offer some news, information, spiritual counsel and other considerations. If you wish to be on the mailing list, please e-mail Fr. James at frjames@ssppoc.org

Stella Seminuk Memorial Fund

Good Christian stewardship can continue after one has left the parish and after one has reposed!

Recently, our parish received a bequest in the amount of \$57,000 from the Estate of Stella Seminuk, a former parishioner. May the Lord bless Stella for her generous gift and the foresight to have included the parish in her final wishes. Memory Eternal!

The Parish Council has established the Stella Seminuk Memorial Fund, which will serve perpetually as an endowment and also as a cash reserve fund for emergencies.

Have you made provisions in your Will to support the continuing good works of Ss. Peter & Paul Church? There is a useful brochure *Now Is The Time*, available at the vestibule stand to help you along.

Saturday Evening Services

Are preparatory to receive Holy Communion. Vigil at 5:30p.m. (Vespers 5:30/Matins 6:15).

OTHER INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL VIRTUES

Besides the Beatitudes, our Lord Jesus Christ gave His followers the instructions also to acquire other virtues, individual and social, essential for the formation of a Christian character. Those virtues can be acquired only by conscious and fervent exercises and practices as the Fathers of the Church have taught and practiced.

THE INDIVIDUAL VIRTUES TO BE PRACTICED

Praying inwardly. "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet (thy heart), and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which seeth in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

Fasting as to God and not as to men. "When thou fasteth...appear not unto men to fast, but unto the Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

Taking care of the soul. It is necessary to mentally keep the body and the soul separated in order that we may take care of each of them. The soul, different from the body, needs different food, clothing and light. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (Luke 4:4).

Keeping the unity of one's soul. A united soul means strength and peace, whereas a divided soul means weakness and destruction. "If a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand," said the Lord. And He also said: "No man can serve two masters...Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

Controlling the heart and the thoughts. Good thoughts are the seed of good works. God sees our thoughts. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said: "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" "From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries" and other evils. Exercise always in thinking and desiring good.

Controlling the tongue. "I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of Judgment."



Avoiding hypocrisy. "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed."

To be as a child in humbleness, sincerity and belief. "Verily I say unto you, except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter the Kingdom of heaven."

Endurance. To endure all adversities in accomplishing Christ's law means to secure the salvation of the soul. "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."

Forbearance from excessive use of food, drink, and worry. "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with gluttony, and drunkenness, and cares of this life."



Believing beyond any doubt in Christ's power and mercy. "Be not afraid, only believe." Believe that "with God nothing shall be impossible." Jesus said: "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Remember that without absolute belief in Christ, hope and love are groundless.

Knowledge of the Scriptures and of the power of God must be increased every day. It helps mightily in strengthening our belief in Christ. The Lord rebuked the Sadducees because of their ignorance, saying: "Ye know neither the Scriptures, nor the power of God."

Solitude is very useful for self-concentration, reviewing one's own life and conversation with God. It is sweet for him who knows how to use it, and it is annoying for the superficial. The Lord Jesus often went to a solitary wilderness, and "He was there alone."

Freedom from things. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Lk.12:15). The soul of a man is of more worth before God than the world. "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Matt. 16:26). We ought to be on guard so as not to identify ourselves, our personality or our soul, with our material possessions, but to lift our souls above everything in the world.

Standing before the Lord. A truly religious man fully realizes that he is standing before the living and all-seeing Lord. Therefore he is ashamed of sin and courageous in doing what is right before God. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matt.10:30).

OVERCOMING SECULARISM AND THE REDUCTION OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY

By Father Alexander Schmemmann

The first level of that religious restoration is, without any doubt, the liturgical one. Our Church need not be ashamed of her identification with liturgy, of her reputation as the liturgical Church *par excellence*, even if, in Western categories, this is understood as a lack of concern for the social and activist aspects of Christianity. For the liturgy was always experienced and understood in our Church as precisely the entering of men into, and communion with, the reality of the Kingdom of God, as that experience of God which alone makes possible everything else—all "action", all "fight." And in this sense the less pragmatic and "world-oriented" it is—the more "useful" it is. In my article on the Liturgical Problem I tried to describe the main aspects of what I understand as liturgical restoration. Let me repeat here only that it consists fundamentally in the recovery by the Church of the true spirit and meaning of liturgy, as an all-embracing *vision of life*, including heaven and earth, time and eternity, spirit and matter and as the *power* of that vision to transform our lives. But in order to recover this the priest who is, above everything else, the celebrant of the liturgy, its guardian and interpreter, must cease to consider the liturgy and the liturgical life of the parish in terms of "attendance", "needs", "possibilities" and "impossibilities". The reasoning: "since no one comes to church on Saturday night, why have a service?"—is the very type of reasoning that must be radically rejected. For, as we have seen, the only real *justification* of the parish as organization is precisely to make the liturgy, the cult of the Church as complete, as Orthodox, as *adequate* as possible, and it is the liturgy, therefore, that is the basic criterion of the only real "success" of the parish. Let the Saturday service—this unique weekly celebration of Christ's resurrection, this essential "source" of our Christian understanding of time and life, be served week after week in an empty church—then at least the various secular "expressions" and "leaders" of the parish: committees, commissions and boards, may become aware of the simple fact that their claim: "we work for the Church" is an empty claim, for if the "Church" for which they work is not primarily a praying and worshipping Church it is not "Church", whatever their work, effort and enthusiasm. Is it not indeed a tragic paradox: we build ever greater and richer



and more beautiful churches and we pray less and less in them? Is it not the only real measure of our "success" that today one may easily be a "Church-member" (and even a "president of the Church") in good standing spending some fifty-two hours in Church per year? And finally, are the massive and complex organizations known as "parishes" and which spend an infinitely superior number of hours discussing their "fund raising" really necessary for those fifty-two hours of corporate prayer? The liturgy—which is the sole responsibility of the priest, his "area" *par excellence*—must become again the measure, the criterion, the judgment of the "parish life." All conversations about people being "busy" and "having no time" are no excuses.

People were always busy, people always worked, and in the past they were, in fact, much busier and had more obstacles to overcome in order to come to Church. In the last analysis it all depends where the treasure of man is—for there will be his heart. The only difference between the present and the past is—and I have repeated this many times—that in the past a man knew that he has to make an *effort*, and that today he expects from

the Church an effort to *adjust herself* to him and his "possibilities". The liturgical restoration must be thus the first challenge to secularism, the first judgment on the all-powerful "prince of this world."

The second religious task and justification of the parish is education. At present it is limited almost exclusively to children and teenagers and constitutes a specialized department within the parish, very often not even under the direct guidance of the priest. What I have in mind here is something much more general: it is the concept of the Christian life as "discipleship" and "education", and thus the understanding of the whole parish as an unceasing education. Virtually all our difficulties, crises and conflicts have as their principle cause the almost abysmal ignorance by our people of the very elements of Christianity. A recent survey shows that more than seventy-five percent of parishioners in "good standing" have never read the Gospel—except what they hear in Church on Sunday—not to speak of the Old Testament. If one adds to this that even some hierarchs think that a formal theological education is not a real "must" for a priest, and that a substantial number of our

priests do not consider teaching their flocks to be their sacred duty—one has the peculiar image of a Church disinterested in the very object of her being. But the Christian concept of *faith* includes both—the *act of believing* and the *content of belief* and one without the other makes a faith dead.

Finally the third essential dimension of the religious restoration in the parish is the recovery of its missionary character. And by this I mean primarily a shift from the selfish self-centeredness of the modern parish to the concept of the parish as *servant*. We use today an extremely ambiguous phraseology: we praise men because they "serve their parish", for example. "Parish" is an end in itself justifying all sacrifices, all efforts, all activities. "For the benefit of the parish" . . . But it is ambiguous because the parish is not an end in itself and once it has become one—it is, in fact, an idol condemned as all other idols in the Gospel. The parish is the means for men of serving God and it itself must *serve* God and His work and only then is it justified and becomes "Church". And again it is the sacred duty and the real function of the priest not to "serve the parish", but to make the parish serve God—and there is a tremendous difference between these two functions. And for the parish to serve God means, first of all, to *help* God's work wherever it is to be helped. I am convinced, and it is enough to read the Gospel just once to be convinced, that as long as our seminaries are obliged, year after year, literally to beg for money, as long as we cannot afford a few chaplains to take care of our students on college campuses, as long as so many obvious, urgent, self-evident spiritual needs of the Church remain unfulfilled because each parish must first "take care of itself"—the beautiful mosaics, golden vestments and jeweled crosses do not please God and that which does not please God is not Christian whatever the appearances. If a man says "I won't help the poor because I must first take care of myself" we call it selfishness and term it a sin. If a parish says it and acts accordingly we consider it Christian—but as long as this "double standard" is accepted as a self-evident norm, as long as all this is praised and glorified as good and Christian at innumerable parish banquets and "affairs", the parish betrays rather than serves God.

But having said all this one can hear the question: "All this may be right and good, but how does one even start one of these 'restorations'?" Is not all this the best illustration of precisely those "impossibilities" which were mentioned at the beginning of this article? And it is here that I will remind my reader of the other—the "*personal*" dimension of

Orthodoxy. I am fully aware that the parish as *organization*, cannot be "converted" to any of these ideals, except perhaps theoretically. In fact, none was in the long history of the Church, which begins with the terrible words addressed to one of the oldest "parishes": "I know your works, you have the name of being alive and you are dead" (Rev. 3:1). Conversion and faith are always personal, and this means that although the priest must preach to *all*, it is always *some* who hear and receive and accept the Word and respond to it. As I said above the greatest tragedy and the surrender to secularism consist precisely in the fact that the *parish*—as organization, as an impersonal majority, as *all*—has virtually concealed from the pastor the *person*, who is the ultimate object of God's love and saving grace. We are so obsessed with the social that not only do we neglect the person but we simply do not believe anymore that it is the *social* that depends on the *personal* and not vice versa. But Christ preached to the multitudes, to all, yet he chose the twelve and spent most of His time teaching them "privately". *Mutatis mutandis*, we must follow the same pattern and it is the *only* way to the solution of our spiritual problem. Speaking of the liturgical restoration I mentioned the empty Church. In reality, however, *it will not be empty*—and if "two or three" attend and participate and "enjoy" the service we have not labored in vain. If but a handful of men and women will discover the sweetness of the knowledge of God, will meet to read and to understand the Gospel, to deepen their spiritual life—we have not labored in vain. If a few will decide to organize a little missionary group, to direct their attention to the needs of the Church—we have not labored in vain. The priest must free himself from the obsession with numbers and success, must learn to value the only real success: That which is hidden in God and cannot be reported in statistics and credited to him at parish affairs. He must himself rediscover the eternal truth about "a little leaven which leavens the whole lump" (I Cor. 5:6)—for this is *the* very essence of Christian faith. For these few will—whether they want it or not—become *witnesses* and sooner or later their testimony will bear its fruit. The parish may be *improved* but only a *person* can be *saved*. Yet his salvation has a tremendous meaning for all and thus for the parish itself. Once more—what is, indeed, *impossible* for a parish, is being constantly revealed as *possible* for a person and, in the last analysis the whole meaning of Christianity is the victory, made *possible* for man by Christ, over the *impossibilities* imposed on man by the "world."