

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

605 Washington Avenue, Manville, New Jersey 08835-1856

Voice: 908-685-1451 / fax: 908-685-1074

Email: frjames@ssppoc.org

Website: www.ssppoc.org

BULLETIN OF MAY 3, 2009

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

SUNDAY/MAY 3

3rd Sunday of Pascha (Tone 3): The Holy Myrrh-Bearers & the Righteous Joseph & Nicodemus; St. Theodosius of Kiev Caves

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy; Coffee Hour; Church School; Book-for-the-Month of Spiritual Reading from Parish Library
12:00p.m. to 2:00p.m. Church Open

WEDNESDAY/MAY 6

6:30p.m. Compline

7:00p.m. Adult Study Part Two: *The Conciliar Structures of the Orthodox Church in America*

THURSDAY/MAY 7

St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre & Minneapolis

9:30a.m. Akathist to St. Alexis on the 100th anniversary of his blessed repose (May 7, 1909)

FRIDAY/MAY 8

St. John the Theologian

9:30a.m. Akathist to St. John

SATURDAY/MAY 9

Translation of the Relics of St. Nicholas to Bari, Italy

9:30a.m. Akathist to St. Nicholas; Confessions
5:30p.m. Vigil; Confessions

SUNDAY/MAY 10

4th Sunday of Pascha (Tone 4) The Paralytic at the Pool

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy; Coffee Hour; Church School; Teen Discussion
12:00p.m. to 2:00p.m. Church Open

Fasting Days

Wednesday, May 6 *wine & oil allowed*

Friday, May 8 *fish, wine & oil allowed*



Tropar to St. Alexis

Tone 4

O Righteous Father Alexis
Our Heavenly intercessor and teacher
Divine adornment of the Church of Christ
Entreat the Master of all
To strengthen the Orthodox Faith in America
To grant peace to the world
And to our souls great mercy!





THE DATE OF PASCHA

According to the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea, 325, Pascha is to be celebrated on the first Sunday, following the full moon after the vernal equinox. The significance of this day is as follows.

The vernal equinox not only marks the beginning of spring for us in the northern hemisphere, but it is also the time when every place on earth is directly touched by the light of the sun and there are twelve hours of daylight and twelve hours of night. While the sun lightens one half of the earth during the day, the full moon lightens the other half by night. The Sunday following this astronomical phenomenon is the brightest Sunday of the year – the Sunday of Great and Holy Pascha.

This astronomical phenomenon is a cosmic image of how Christ unites both the spiritual and physical worlds in the most resplendent day of His Resurrection. Throughout the hymnology of Pascha, this reality is proclaimed. In the Paschal Canon, we sing:

"Now all is filled with light: heaven and earth and the lower regions. Let all creation celebrate the rising of Christ in Whom we are established!"

"This is the bright and saving night, sacred and supremely festal. It heralds the radiant day of the Resurrection on which the timeless light shone forth from the tomb for all!"

In Genesis we read how God on the first day created light and separated the light from the darkness; the light He called day and the darkness He called night. When Christ rose from the dead on Sunday, the first day of the week, He inaugurated a new creation, a new era, in which He would give to the world the never-waning Light of His Resurrection. The Gospel reading for the Pascha Liturgy proclaims this mystery:

"In the beginning was the Word... and the Word was God... All things were made by Him... In Him was life; and the life was the light of men... The light shines in darkness and the darkness overcomes it not." (John 1:1,3-5)

PASCHA TO PENTECOST: 50 DAYS OF GRACE

We are celebrating the feast of the Bright Resurrection of the Son of God. These 50 days are days of light, joy, grace, and peace. We especially strive to maintain what is known as "Paschal Joy." What is this joy? Our realized happiness that we have spiritually died, been buried, and resurrected with Christ. Christ's Death and Resurrection is at the same time our own taste of death to sin and genuine resurrection.

Saint Paul teaches us that having died to the "old man" (the ways of sin) we, through Christ, have been born again in the "New Man." "You have been raised to life with Christ. Set your hearts, then, on the things that are in heaven, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Let your thoughts dwell on things there, not on things here on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Your real life is Christ, and when He appears, then you too will appear with Him in glory." (Colossians 3:1-4)

Newness of life has been given to us by and in Christ Jesus. It is the greatest gift. Let us hold fast to it and guard it from the devil's envy. Let us be sure to be completely dead to our old habits of passion and sin; and alive in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Let us continue to celebrate in word and deed, living:

A Pascha worthy of veneration,
A Pascha which is Christ the Redeemer,
A blameless Pascha,
A Pascha of the faithful!

Liturgical Notes:

This period of great festivity and joy finds its liturgical expression in the following manner:

- ❖ We greet each other with the Paschal salutation, "Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen!" for 40 days, until Ascension Day.
- ❖ We do not kneel or make prostrations either at church services or in our homes until the "Kneeling Prayers" at Pentecost.
- ❖ The Paschal Troparion, "Christ is risen from the dead" is sung or said at the beginning or end of all prayers until the Leave-taking of Pascha on the Eve of Ascension.
- ❖ The prayer, "O Heavenly King" is omitted until Pentecost, being replaced with the Troparion of Pascha and then Ascension.

Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

May 04, 1973 John Holovach
May 05, 1961 John Ivaniec
May 05, 1970 Katherine Nebozinsky
May 06, 1971 Basil Pawlik
May 06, 1982 Philip Recetz
May 08, 1917 Demetrius Polegonsky
May 09, 1972 Pauline Lasin
May 10, 1984 Ignattius Chwat

Orthodox Youth Soccer Tournament June 13th, Saturday at South River

A day of fellowship and athletic activity. Join the team! Talk to Alexander Torrisi (732-545-5642). Please note that the date is June 13th it had originally been scheduled for June 6th.

Open Door Ministry Begins in May

On Sundays after the Coffee Hour when the "invitation" for others to come and look and perhaps pick-up some material about Orthodoxy. If you wish to be a "greeter," please speak with Symeon Combs. The times are 12:00p.m. to 2:00p.m. You may team up with someone.

Kneeling and Prostrations

In accordance with the festal nature of the 50 Days of Pentecost (April 19th – June 7th). We do not kneel or make prostrations either in church or in our homes. In fact, two Ecumenical Councils strictly forbid it.

Adult Study Classes – 3 Wednesdays

Wednesdays, Apr. 29, May 6, May 13 at 7:00p.m. in the Conference Room. The topic for the 3 week class is "*The Conciliar Structures of the Orthodox Church in America.*" An examination of the thought and writings of Metropolitan Jonah on the mission/identity and core values of our Church. The need for new understandings and new structures in our church at all levels.

Parish Council Meeting

May 21st, Thursday at 7:00p.m.

Parish Website: www.ssppoc.org

Has posted photos taken at Pascha and Bright Monday.

Namesday Greetings

St. Susan/3rd Sunday after Pascha: Susan Gorbaturk; Many Blessed Years!

Many Blessed years!

To the newly-illuminated Julianna Bakaletz, on her recent Baptism! The Lord preserve her.

105th Annual Pilgrimage to the Monastery of St. Tikhon (May 22-25)

See the posted flyer for more information on this four day pilgrimage.

Offerings for the week of May 3rd

Olive Oil – in memory of Michael and Justine; in memory of Deacon Gregory Lapchuk; for the health of Stephanie (birthday); in memory of Vaschen and Emilia.

Wine – in memory of Joan.

Terms To Understand

Western Iberia the two countries of Spain and Portugal share the Iberian peninsula.

Eastern Iberia is the land of Georgia or Gruzhen. In the Greek language Iberia is known as Iveron

Freemasonry the secret organization of the Masonic Lodge strictly forbidden to Orthodox Christians. Those who study Masonic teachings will learn that the Lodge believes any religion or any god is as good as another. The serious consequence of excommunication is reserved for any Orthodox man or women who joins this society or one of its subsidiaries.

Prokeimenon from the Greek term for "that which comes before." It is a short verse or stanza which precedes a Scriptural Reading. The text of the prokeimenon is usually from the Book of Psalms or the Old Testament.

Templon is another term for the iconostasis or the icon screen.

Ecclesiastical anything dealing with or pertaining to the Church and its life.

FIFTH CATECHISM

1. *Are the clergy representatives of Christ?*

No, they are not representatives, but are the mystery of the tangible presence of Christ; they are in the place and type of Christ.

2. *What are the stages of priesthood?*

There are three, that of the bishop, that of the priest (presbyter) and that of the deacon.

3. *What does apostolic succession involve?*

The continuation of the grace of priesthood from the time of the Apostles until today and in the preservation of truth.

4. *What is the work of the clergy?*

To cure people and to celebrate the sacraments of the Church.

5. *What is the Church Militant and what is the Church Triumphant?*

The Church Militant are the Christians who are alive and are striving to be united with God. The Church Triumphant are the saints who have fallen asleep in the Kingdom of God.

6. *Who are called saints?*

All those who partake of the deifying energy of God.



7. *What designations has Tradition given to the Mother of God?*

Many. Amongst them: Theotokos, Mother of God, Panagia, Ever-virgin.

8. *How is the Theotokos understood as a mediator?*

The mediator between God and men is Christ. The Theotokos is a mediator between people and Christ.

9. *Why do we love the Theotokos?*

Because we love Christ and so that we can attain Christ's love.

10. *How many categories are the saints divided into?*

They are Prophets, Apostles and then all the other saints, who are divided into martyrs, hieromartyrs, and the saintly and married saints. There are saints of all ages, all professions, all ethnicities, all eras.

11. *Tell me about the life of the saint whose name you will bear and who will be your guardian.*



Repose of St Alexis Toth the confessor and defender of Orthodoxy in America Commemorated on May 7

Our holy Father Alexis, the defender of the Orthodox Faith and zealous worker in the Lord's vineyard, was born in Austro-Hungary on March 18, 1854 into a poor Carpatho-Russian family. Like many others in the Austro-Hungarian empire, the Toths were Eastern Rite Catholics. Alexis' father and brother were priests and his uncle was a bishop in the Uniate church. He received an excellent education and knew several languages (Carpatho-Russian, Hungarian, Russian, German, Latin, and a reading knowledge of Greek). He married Rosalie Mihalich, a priest's daughter, and was ordained on April 18, 1878 to serve as second priest in a Uniate parish. His wife died soon afterwards, followed by their only child - losses which the saint endured with the patience of Job.

Feasts & Saints

Address:
PO Box 675
Syosset, NY
11791-0675

Office:
516-922-0550

Fax:
516-922-0954

Email:
info@oca.org

Web:
www.oca.org

© OCA
All rights reserved.

In May, 1879, Fr Alexis was appointed secretary to the Bishop of Presov and also Administrator of the Diocesan Administration. He was also entrusted with the directorship of an orphanage. At Presov Seminary, Father Toth taught Church History and Canon Law, which served him well in his later life in America. St Alexis did not serve long as a professor or an administrator, for the Lord had a different future planned for him. In October, 1889 he was appointed to serve as pastor of a Uniate parish in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Like another Abraham, he left his country and his relatives to fulfill the will of God (Gen 12:1).

Upon his arrival in America, Father Alexis presented himself to the local Roman Catholic diocesan authority, Archbishop John Ireland, since there was no Uniate bishop in America at that time. Archbishop Ireland belonged to the party of American Catholics who favored the "Americanization" of all Roman Catholics. His vision for the future was founded on a common faith, customs, and the use of the English language for everything except liturgical celebrations. Naturally, ethnic parishes and non-Latin rite clergy did not fit into this vision. Thus, when Father Toth came to present his credentials, Archbishop Ireland greeted him with open hostility. He refused to recognize him as a legitimate Catholic priest or to grant permission for him to serve in his diocese.

As a historian and professor of Canon Law, Father Toth knew his rights under the terms of the Unia and would not accept Archbishop Ireland's unjust decisions. In October of 1890, there was a meeting of eight of the ten Uniate priests in America at Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania under the chairmanship of Father Toth. By this time the American bishops had written to Rome demanding the recall to Europe of all Uniate priests in America, fearing that Uniate priests and parishes would hinder the assimilation of immigrants into American culture. Uniate bishops in Europe refused to listen to the priests' pleas for help.

Archbishop Ireland sent a letter to his parishes ordering their members not to attend Father Toth's parish nor to accept any priestly ministrations from him. Expecting imminent deportation, Father Toth explained the situation to his parishioners and suggested it might be best for him to leave and return to Europe.

"No," they said. "Let's go to the Russian bishop. Why should we always submit ourselves to foreigners?" It was decided to write to the Russian consul in San Francisco in order to ask for the name and address of the Russian bishop. Ivan Mlinar went to San Francisco to make initial contact with Bishop Vladimir; then in February, 1891 Father Toth and his church warden, Paul Podany, also made the journey. Subsequently, Bishop Vladimir came to Minneapolis and on March 25, 1891 received Father Toth and 361 parishioners into the Orthodox Church of their ancestors. The parishioners regarded this event as a new Triumph of Orthodoxy, crying out with joy: "Glory to God for His great mercy!"

This initiative came from the people themselves, and was not the result of any coercion from outsiders. The Russian Orthodox Church was unaware of the existence of these Slavic Uniate immigrants to America, but responded positively to their petition to be reunited to the Orthodox Church.

The example of St Alexis and his parish in returning to Orthodoxy was an encouragement to hundreds of other Uniates. The ever-memorable one was like a candle upon a candlestick giving light to others (Mt.5:15), and his flock may be likened to the leaven mixed with meal which leavened the whole (Mt.13:33). Through his fearless preaching he uprooted the tares which had sprung up in the wheat of true doctrine, and exposed the false teachings which had led his people astray. Although he did not hesitate to point out errors in the doctrines of other denominations, he was careful to warn his flock against intolerance. His writings and sermons are filled with admonitions to respect other people and to

refrain from attacking their faith.

While it is true that he made some strong comments, especially in his private correspondence with the church administration, it must be remembered that this was done while defending the Orthodox Church and the American Mission from unfounded accusations by people who used much harsher language than Father Toth. His opponents may be characterized by intolerance, rude behaviour, unethical methods and threats against him and his parishioners. Yet, when Father Alexis was offended or deceived by other people he forgave them, and he would often ask his bishop to forgive his omissions and mistakes.

In the midst of great hardships, this herald of godly theology and sound doctrine poured forth an inexhaustible stream of Orthodox writings for new converts, and gave practical advice on how to live in an Orthodox manner. For example, his article "How We should Live in America" stresses the importance of education, cleanliness, sobriety, and the presence of children in church on Sundays and Holy Days.

Although the Minneapolis parish was received into the Orthodox Church in March, 1891, it was not until July, 1892 that the Holy Synod of Russia recognized and accepted the parish into the Diocese of Alaska and the Aleutians. This resolution reached America only in October, 1892. During that time there was a climate of religious and ethnic hostility against the new converts. Father Alexis was accused of selling out his own Carpatho-Russian people and his religion to the "Muscovites" for financial gain.

In reality he did not receive any financial support for a long time, for his parish was very poor. Until his priestly salary began to arrive from Russia, the righteous one was obliged to work in a bakery in order to support himself. Even though his funds were meager, he did not neglect to give alms to the poor and needy. He shared his money with other clergy worse off than himself, and contributed to the building of churches and to the education of seminarians in Minneapolis. He was not anxious about his life (Mt.6:25), what he would eat or drink or wear. Trusting in God to take care of him, St Alexis followed the admonition of Our Savior to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Mt.6:33). So he bore the tribulation, slander, and physical attacks with patience and spiritual joy, reminding us that "godliness is stronger than all" (Wisdom of Solomon 10:12).

Bishops Vladimir, Nicholas, St Tikhon, and Platon recognized the special gifts of Father Toth, so they often sent him forth to preach and teach wherever there were people of Slavic background. Even though he was aware of his shortcomings and inadequacies, yet he was obedient to the instructions of the bishops. He did not hesitate or make excuses, but went immediately to fulfill his mission. St Alexis visited many Uniate parishes, explaining the differences between Orthodoxy, Protestantism, Roman Catholicism and Uniatism, stressing that the true way to salvation is in Orthodoxy.

Like Josiah, "he behaved himself uprightly in the conversion of his people" (Sir 49:2). He was instrumental in the formation or return of seventeen parishes, planting a vineyard of Christ in America, and increasing its fruitful yield many times over. By 1909, the time of his blessed repose, many thousands of Carpatho-Russian and Galician Uniates had returned to Orthodoxy. This was a major event in the history of the North American Mission, which would continue to shape the future of Orthodoxy in this country for many generations to come. Any future growth or success may truly be regarded as the result of Father Toth's apostolic labors.

Who can tell of the saint's spiritual struggles? Who can speak of the prayers which his pious soul poured forth unto God? He did not make a public display of his piety, but prayed to God in secret with all modesty, with contrition and inward tears. God, Who sees everything done in secret, openly rewarded the saint (Mt.6:6). It is inconceivable that St Alexis could have accomplished his apostolic labors unless God had blessed and strengthened him for such work. Today the Church continues to reap the fruits of his teaching and preaching.

Father Toth's efforts did not go unrecognized in his own lifetime. He received a jeweled mitre from the Holy Synod, as well as the Order of St Vladimir and the Order of St Anna from Czar Nicholas II for distinguished service and devotion to God and country. In 1907, he was considered as a candidate for the episcopal office. He declined this honor, however, humbly pointing out that this responsibility should be given to a younger, healthier man.

At the end of 1908, St Alexis' health began to decline due to a complication of illnesses. He went to the seashore in southern New Jersey in an attempt to regain his health, but soon returned to Wilkes-Barre, where he was confined to bed for two months. The righteous one reposed on Friday, May 7, 1909 (April 24 on the Old Calendar), the feast of Sts Sava and Alexus the Hermit of the Kiev Caves

