

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN NOVEMBER 29, 2009

SUNDAY/NOVEMBER 29

25th Sunday After Pentecost (Tone 8)

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

Coffee Hour

MONDAY/NOVEMBER 30

7:00p.m. Vespers

7:45p.m. Outreach Meeting

TUESDAY/DECEMBER 1

St. Philaret the Merciful

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

WEDNESDAY/DECEMBER 2

6:30p.m. Compline

7-8:30p.m. Adult Study: Part One on

"The 3 Parts of the Soul and Their Curative Exercises by St. Theophan the Recluse"

THURSDAY/DECEMBER 3

6:30p.m. Compline and Akathist to

Great-Martyr Barbara (Dec. 4)

SATURDAY/DECEMBER 5

St. Sabbas the Sanctified

9:30a.m. Akathist to St. Sabbas; Confession

5:30p.m. Vigil; Confession

SUNDAY/DECEMBER 6

26th Sunday After Pentecost (Tone 1)

St. Nicholas the Wonderworker

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

Hour; 12:00p.m. Movie: *"Faith of our Fathers"*

ST. PHILARET



Tropar Tone 4

Emulating Abraham in faith /

And following after Job in patience, O Father
Philaret /

You did distribute the blessings of the earth to the
needy /

And did manfully endure the lack thereof /
Therefore Christ God, the Judge of the contest /
Has crowned you with a crown of light ///
Him do you entreat that our souls may be saved.

A Vesper Hymn

Truly you did love well, O Philaret wise in love,
being a lover of truly good works; and
illuminating all with love patterned upon that of
God, you did give your possessions to God in
loan, laying as treasure the blessings of heaven;
wherefore, we now glorify you with a mighty voice
and cry out to you with love: Rejoice, O Philaret,
beloved of God!



Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

Dec. 25, 40th Day Patriarch Pavle
Dec. 26, 40th Day Mary Romanak
Nov. 29, 1921 Alexander Khvechin
Nov. 29, 1934 Fr. Peter Shemashko
Nov. 29, 1981 Mary Fetchina
Nov. 30, 1930 Athanasius Klebanovich
Dec. 05, 1941 Anastasia Rilik
Dec. 05, 1978 Stefan Syubiak

The Nativity 40 Day Lent

Began November 15th and is observed until after the Divine Liturgy on the Nativity Feast, December 25th. A Fast is observed from meat, dairy, fish, wine and oil. Your parish wall calendar as well as the monthly printed calendar indicates fast modifications of fish, wine and oil.

The Holy Mysteries of Confession & Communion

Should be received by all the faithful in this period of the Nativity Lent. Parishioners desiring to make their Confession elsewhere than in their parish church, should first seek a blessing from their parish priest.

Offerings for the Weeks of November 22

Olive Oil – in memory of Michael and Justina; in memory of Richard Nevitt; for the health of Alexander (namesday); in memory of Joan.

Wine – for the health of Basil (namesday); for the health of Archpriest Michael.

Namesday Greetings

St. Andrew/Nov. 30: Robert Andrew Erkman, Andrew Long, Andrew Keller, Andrea Hunchar and Andrea Arpastean; Many Blessed Years!

Needful of Consideration

- 1) There is no smoking on the grounds, this includes the entrances into the lower and upper halls. Please smoke off church grounds.
- 2) Lipstick is re-appearing on the icons. Please do not kiss icons with lipstick on.
- 3) Usage of the copy machine and re-filling with paper and toner ought to be done only by those who know what they are doing.

Adult Study Classes: Dec. 2 & 9

These two Wednesday evening classes will focus on *"The 3 Powers of the Soul and Their Curative Exercises."* Based on the writings of St. Theophan the Recluse (+1894), we will examine the mind, the will and the heart and how they are spiritualized. Classes are open to all. We meet in the Conference Room 7:00 to 8:30p.m.

Remember in Prayer

Archpriest Michael Lewis, Tatiana Onuschak, Charles Kachek, Theodora Combs and other especially needful of prayers.

The Miraculous Kursk-Root Icon

Will be in our territory on two near dates.

On Dec. 15, Tues. at 6:00p.m. at St. Elizabeth Church in Rocky Hill. An akathist will be served, followed by a dinner. All are invited!

On Jan. 2 Sat. at 9:30a.m. Metropolitan Jonah will celebrate the Divine Liturgy before the Icon at Ss. Peter & Paul Church in Jersey City. All are invited!

Movie Presentation – Sunday, December 6

At 12:00noon the film *"Faith of our Fathers"* will be shown. This documentary examines what the founding fathers of the USA intended when they framed the Constitution and wrote the First Amendment religion clauses. What is the separation of Church and State? What was the belief of the fathers and how have things changed? What was the Supreme Court decision in 1947 with the State of NJ that changed the course of religion in our USA? A second presentation of the film will be Tuesday, Dec. 8 at 7:30p.m.

Food Basket For Local Food Pantry

Staple food items may be brought to the church Dec. 6, 13 and 20 for the local food pantry. Baskets will be in the vestibule.

Christmas Cookie Walk

Sunday, Dec. 13. In the Lower Hall at 11:10a.m. Bakers sought. For more information please contact Jill Peterson at 908-541-9586 or jap2002@optonline.net



Righteous Philaret the Merciful of Amnia in Asia Minor Commemorated on December 1

Righteous Philaret the Merciful, son of George and Anna, was raised in piety and the fear of God. He lived during the eighth century in the village of Amneia in the Paphlagonian district of Asia Minor. His wife, Theoseba, was from a rich and illustrious family, and they had three children: a son John, and daughters Hypatia and Evanthia.

Philaret was a rich and illustrious dignitary, but he did not hoard his wealth. Knowing that many people suffered from poverty, he remembered the words of the Savior about the dread Last Judgment and about "these least ones" (Mt. 25:40); the the Apostle Paul's reminder that we will take nothing with us from this world (1 Tim 6:7); and the assertion of King David that the righteous would not be forsaken (Ps 36/37:25). Philaret, whose name means "lover of virtue," was famed for his love for the poor.

One day Ishmaelites [Arabs] attacked Paphlagonia, devastating the land and plundering the estate of Philaret. There remained only two oxen, a donkey, a cow with her calf, some beehives, and the house. But he also shared them with the poor. His wife reproached him for being heartless and unconcerned for his own family. Mildly, yet firmly he endured the reproaches of his wife and the jeers of his children. "I have hidden away riches and treasure," he told his family, "so much that it would be enough for you to feed and clothe yourselves, even if you lived a hundred years without working."

The saint's gifts always brought good to the recipient. Whoever received anything from him found that the gift would multiply, and that person would become rich. Knowing this, a certain man came to St Philaret asking for a calf so that he could start a herd. The cow missed its calf and began to bellow. Theoseba said to her husband, "You have no pity on us, you merciless man, but don't you feel sorry for the cow? You have separated her from her calf." The saint praised his wife, and agreed that it was not right to separate the cow and the calf. Therefore, he called the poor man to whom he had given the calf and told him to take the cow as well.

That year there was a famine, so St Philaret took the donkey and went to borrow six bushels of wheat from a friend of his. When he returned home, a poor man asked him for a little wheat, so he told his wife to give the man a bushel. Theoseba said, "First you must give a bushel to each of us in the family, then you can give away the rest as you choose." Philaretos then gave the man two bushels of wheat. Theoseba said sarcastically, "Give him half the load so you can share it." The saint measured out a third bushel and gave it to the man. Then Theoseba said, "Why don't you give him the bag, too, so he can carry it?" He gave him the bag. The exasperated wife said, "Just to spite me, why not give him all the wheat." St Philaret did so.

Now the man was unable to lift the six bushels of wheat, so Theoseba told her husband to give him the donkey so he could carry the wheat home. Blessing his wife, Philaret gave the donkey to the man, who went home rejoicing. Theoseba and the children wept because they were hungry.

The Lord rewarded Philaret for his generosity: when the last measure of wheat was given away, a old friend sent him forty bushels. Theoseba kept most of the wheat for herself and the children, and the saint gave away his share to the poor and had nothing left. When his wife and children were eating, he would go to them and they gave him some food. Theoseba grumbled saying, "How long are you going to keep that treasure of yours hidden? Take it out so we can buy food with it."

During this time the Byzantine empress Irene (797-802) was seeking a bride for her son, the future emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitos (780-797). Therefore, emissaries were sent throughout all the Empire to find a suitable girl, and the envoys came to Amneia.

When Philaret and Theoseba learned that these most illustrious guests were to visit their house, Philaret was very happy, but Theoseba was sad, for they did not have enough food. But Philaret told his wife to light the fire and to decorate their home. Their neighbors, knowing that imperial envoys were expected, brought everything required for a rich feast.

The envoys were impressed by the saint's daughters and granddaughters. Seeing their beauty, their deportment, their clothing, and their admirable qualities, the envoys agreed that Philaret's granddaughter, Maria was exactly what they were looking for. This Maria exceeded all her rivals in quality and modesty and indeed became Constantine's wife, and the emperor rewarded Philaret.

Thus fame and riches returned to Philaret. But just as before, this holy lover of the poor generously

Feasts & Saints

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distributed alms and provided a feast for the poor. He and his family served them at the meal. Everyone was astonished at his humility and said: "This is a man of God, a true disciple of Christ."

He ordered a servant to take three bags and fill one with gold, one with silver, and one with copper coins. When a beggar approached, Philaret ordered his servant to bring forth one of the bags, whichever God's providence would ordain. Then he would reach into the bag and give to each person, as much as God willed.

St Philaret refused to wear fine clothes, nor would he accept any imperial rank. He said it was enough for him to be called the grandfather of the Empress. The saint reached ninety years of age and knew his end was approaching. He went to the Rodolpheia ("The Judgment") monastery in Constantinople. He gave some gold to the Abbess and asked her to allow him to be buried there, saying that he would depart this life in ten days.

He returned home and became ill. On the tenth day he summoned his family, he exhorted them to imitate his love for the poor if they desired salvation. Then he fell asleep in the Lord. He died in the year 792 and was buried in the Rodolpheia Judgment monastery in Constantinople.

The appearance of a miracle after his death confirmed the sainthood of Righteous Philaret. As they bore the body of the saint to the cemetery, a certain man, possessed by the devil, followed the funeral procession and tried to overturn the coffin. When they reached the grave, the devil threw the man down on the ground and went out of him. Many other miracles and healings also took place at the grave of the saint.

After the death of the righteous Philaret, his wife Theoseba worked at restoring monasteries and churches devastated during a barbarian invasion.

Russian Patriarch protests court ruling to ban cross from Italian schools

Moscow, November 26, Interfax - Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia has supported Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's opposition to the idea of banning crucifixes from Italian public schools.

"Italy and other European countries' Christian heritage must not be a subject of scrutiny at European rights agencies," Patriarch Kirill said in a letter to Berlusconi, posted on the Moscow Patriarchate's official website.

Patriarch Kirill was commenting on a ruling, passed by the European Court of Human Rights on November 3, on a lawsuit, filed by an Italian mother, who claimed that crucifixes at public schools is a violation of human rights.

"The Christian religious symbols present in Europe's public space are part of the European identity, without which the past, the present and the future of this continent are unthinkable. The guaranteeing of a secular nature of the state must not be used as a pretext for infusing an anti-religious ideology that conspicuously breaches peace in society and discriminates against Europe's religious majority - Christians," the Russian Patriarch said.

Patriarch Kirill voiced his "full and unconditional support" for the Italian government's plans to appeal the court judgment with the European Court's Grand Chamber. "European democracy must not incite Christianophobia, as the theomachist regimes did in the past," he said.

The Russian Orthodox Church in cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church will inform the world and European communities of its "categorical rejection of such judgments and stimulate the condemnation of the Europeans Court of Human Rights' practices in various domains," Patriarch Kirill said.

The icon of the Virgin Mary has flown over the Earth with the sacred procession

Moscow, November 25, Interfax - Unusual sacred procession round the Earth is made with the icon of Virgin Mary "The Sign".

On September 30 the spaceship *Soyuz TMA 16* which had a mission to bring the icon to the International Space Station was driven from the Baikonur cosmodrome, the representative of the *Galaxy* studying centre initiated the project told *Interfax-Religion* on Wednesday.

The sacred procession was finished on October 11. The icon has made 176 coils round the Earth and it was delivered back on the "Soyuz TMA 14" spaceship.

The icon of the Virgin Mary "The Sign" will be presented on December 8-14 at the Orthodox exhibition at the All-Russia Exhibition Centre. It will be possible for everybody to get acquainted with video and picture stories about the sacred procession.

The project was carried out on blessing of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and with the support of the Center of National Glory of Russia, the St. Andrew the First-Called Foundation and the *Energy* space-rocket corporation.

Four years ago the icon from the Transfiguration Monastery of the Valaam island has also been sent to the space. For two months of staying at the station, it was flown round the Earth with cosmonaut Sergey Krikalev for about thousand times.

Answers To Your Questions

by Fr. Lawrence R. Barriger

The "Mistakes" of the Bible

Question: In reading the New Testament it becomes obvious that there are discrepancies and disagreements in the texts. For instance in recording the birth of Christ, St. Matthew tells us that the wise men found the Christ Child in a house (Matt.2:11) whereas St. Luke says that the shepherds found him lying in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn. (Luke 2:12). In addition there are two versions of the Lord's prayer, (one in Matthew and one in Luke) and while Matthew 27:5 says that Judas hanged himself Acts 1:18 tells us that Judas fell headfirst on to the field that he bought with the thirty-pieces of silver and his insides burst out. How are these differences to be explained and why were they never made to agree?

In answering this question we must touch on the idea of inspiration and its meaning, since we regard the New Testament as inspired by the Holy Spirit, and briefly to address the history of the text of the New Testament to which we go first.

Although it seems difficult for us to comprehend so many centuries later we must realize that the world of the first century A.D. was primarily an oral world with a great emphasis placed on listening carefully to instruction or reading in general.

And then too, when anyone came along who had been a follower of the presbyters I would inquire about the presbyters discourses: what was said by Andrew, or by Peter, or by Philip, or by Thomas or James, or by John or Matthew or by any other of the Lord's disciples; and what Aristion and the Presbyter John, the disciples of the Lord say. It did not seem to me that I could get so much profit from the contents of books as from a living and abiding voice.

— Papias of Hierapolis +130 A.D. —

With these words Papias, the bishop of Hierapolis in Asia Minor relates how he diligently sought out those who knew the Apostles of the Lord for firsthand information regarding their message from a "living and abiding voice." While it may seem strange to the modern reader of the New Testament who comes from a world where we want "to see it in writing" the first Christians felt exactly the opposite - they believed because they heard the word and not because they read it as Papias points out.

In fact the four Gospels are not the oldest parts of the New Testament - the Letters of St. Paul to the various churches are. The Gospels only came to be written when the "living and abiding voice" of the Apostles began to fade through old age and death that the Gospels were written. Papias relates to us for example that St. Mark the Evangelist was a hearer of Peter and wrote down the teaching of Peter without any attempt to carefully construct a biography of Jesus.

Gospel Origins

The Gospels began as attempts to set down in words teachings and narratives about the Lord that circulated in oral form from the Apostles and their immediate listeners. If several people see an automobile accident from four different corners of an intersection they will have four slightly different versions of the same event. Compare the four Gospels descriptions of the crucifixion of Jesus. Luke relates to us the story of the "good thief" (Luke 23) but Matthew tells us that both thieves insulted Jesus with the crowd (Matt. 27:44).

One way this can be explained is by realizing that both of these stories depend on the distance from the cross of two different eye-witnesses: the witness of Luke, being closer hears the dialogue of Jesus and the "repentant thief" yet Matthew's witness is too far away. He sees the Saviour and the thieves conversing but the dialogue is lost in the shouting of the crowd; he or she assumes that the thieves also are mocking the Lord.

We must from the outset know that the evangelists are not writing detail perfect biographies of Jesus, but are composing testimonies of faith so that "you also may believe." (John 20:31). Very often the evangelists "telescope" historical events such as the visit of the wise men of Matthew chapter two. The first chapter of Matthew relates the birth of Christ. The second chapter tells of the visit of the wise men which took place simply, according to Matthew, "after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea." (Matt. 2:1). This simple statement has caused us to assume that the wise men came on the night Jesus was born and we have come to associate their visit with the Nativity of the Lord in art as well as hymns.

But Matthew has "telescoped" this event by omitting reference to any passage of time except to say that it took place "after" Jesus was born. In fact it could and most probably did take place up to two years after Jesus was born based on the answer of the wise men about when the star first appeared to King Herod. (Matthew 2:7). Based on the answer of the Magi Herod orders the death of all of the children of the region "two years old and under according to the time which he had ascertained from the magi." (Matthew 2:16).

Therefore it is not surprising that the Magi find the Christ-child in a house (Matthew 2:11) and not in the manger that the shepherds find him of St. Luke's Gospel for the night of His Birth has long since passed.

Death of Judas

The discrepancies about the death of Judas mentioned in the question at the beginning of this article illustrate yet another difference that no doubt goes back to different sources used by Matthew and St. Luke in the Book of Acts. Both accounts simply relate that he died a violent death; in the one the "potter's field" was purchased by the Temple priests with the betrayal money of Judas; in Acts the purchase of this field is attributed to Judas himself.

Judas, no doubt, was an infamous figure in the Apostolic community and his death was seen as being prophetic of the end of the wicked. None of the Apostles were eyewitnesses to the death of Judas but simply came to hear about what happened to him and then began to reflect on his death in terms of Scripture. In this case, St. Matthew most likely reflects what historically happened. Acts.1:15-21 presents the death of Judas as the fulfillment of a prophecy and the falling headlong and bursting are described in the Old Testament book *Wisdom of Solomon* (4:19) as the fate of the wicked. The "Field of Blood" may have been the place of the suicide

wicked. The "Field of Blood" may have been the place of the suicide of Judas. In any case, we have here the same event being described later by two different sources. Many other examples could be cited in the Four Gospels but all of them can be resolved in some way or sometimes in several ways.

The Church has always been aware of these discrepancies in the Gospels, (which by the way affect no dogma or belief) and in fact has insisted on them. In the second century, there was an attempt by a Christian named Tatian to harmonize the Four Gospels into one perfect narrative called the *Diatessaron*

(One from the Four) which would resolve many of these problems.

The Orthodox Church soundly rejected this work, even though it had some popularity in some places for a while. The Church sees in these Gospel "discrepancies" the truth of the historical events related in believable form - not the polished and harmonized story of an elaborate hoax. The Apostles and evangelists were after all human beings who related not a story that they cooked up among themselves but what they actually experienced and heard.

When someone is inspired to paint an icon, his or her faith is expressed through the medium

of paint and wood as well as personal talent. In the same way in inspiring the writers of the Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit did not obliterate the intellect and talents of the human being but used them as an artist uses the mediums of paint and wood. The mediums are not destroyed or changed but are used to present the message of faith in the picture of the icon or in the Gospels. The evangelists truly were the "brushes of the Holy Spirit," each one reflecting his unique human experience as with each of them the Holy Spirit painted the "written icon" the Good News of the Salvation to be found in Jesus Christ.

