

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF JULY 19, 2015

*****100th Anniversary Celebration: October 3 & 4*****

SUNDAY/JULY 19

7th Sunday After Pentecost

St. Seraphim of Sarov (+1834)

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy followed by blessing of autos and "things mobile" Coffee Hour

MONDAY/JULY 20

Prophet Elias (+12th c. BC)

Nun-Martyr Maria of Paris (+1945)

9:30a.m. Akathist to Prophet Elias

WEDNESDAY/JULY 22

7-8:00p.m. Lemonade & Conversations

SATURDAY/JULY 25

9:30a.m. Akathist to St. Paisios of Athos; Confessions

5:30p.m. Vigil; Confessions

SUNDAY/JULY 26

8th Sunday After Pentecost

St. Jacob of Alaska (+1864)

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



1000 days and nights on the rock in prayer.

HOLY DORMTION LENT:

A two week Fast in honor the Mother of God is observed August 1st thru 14th

"A fish that is alive swims against the flow of water. A fish that is dead floats down with the water. A true Christian goes against the current of any sinful age. A false one is swept away by its swiftness."

- St. Philaret of Moscow (+1867)

Offerings Week of July 19

Olive Oil: in memory of Michael, Justina, Mary, Rosalia; Anastasia and William in memory of Vaschen and Emilia; for the health of Stacey and Robert (anniversary).

Wine: for a safe journey; in memory of Gheorghe, Gabriela, Floarea, Alexandru, Maria, Elena, Grigore and Elena.

Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

July 20, 1925 Maria Simonovich
July 20, 2007 Ronald Kavchok
July 21, 1922 Luke Maximovich
July 21, 1925 Theodosius Horbel
July 22, 1982 Ann Holovach
July 22, 1989 Helen Stashkevetch
July 23, 1988 John Suseck
July 23, 1988 David Riegler
July 24, 1950 Joseph Hamernick
July 24, 1965 Steven Sabat
July 24, 1996 Raymond Bodenchuk
July 24, 2004 Elizabeth Tyevech
July 25, 1941 Maria Kuch
July 25, 1966 Joseph Verkon
July 25, 1973 John Pawlik

Coffee Hour Hosts

July 19 Motoviloff, Torrisi, Kachek & Stone
July 26 Mantzafos, Sokol, Arpastean,
Nasledysheva & Sarchisian
Aug. 02 (fast foods) Dunaenko, Wypych,
Chirnoaga, Moldoveanu & Nemes

Usher Schedule

July 19 Dennis F. & Peter B.
July 26 Edward S. & Kahka K.
Aug. 02 Timothy S. & Peter B.

Counters

July 19 Inga G. & Peter B.
July 26 Ekaterini M. & Ciprian C.
Aug.02 Rebecca O. & Edward S.

2015 Equal Sacrifice Model is in Effect

Each of our 70 parishioners (100%) is asked to make an extra offering over the amount of your usual offering of \$2.87 to \$8.62 per week to cover this year's deficit. This is based on 12 months, with

2 months already over. The Lord bless your sacrifice and generosity! If absent, please mail in.

Small Projects/Landscaping/Etc.

Our part-time worker, Javier is available. Speak with Fr. James.

Lemonade & Informal Talks – Wednesday evenings of July

From 7-8:00p.m. a refreshing beverage and informal conversations at the Gazebo. Come!

Names Day Greetings

St. Ann/July 25: Lisa Keller, Jill Peterson, Dolly Bakaletz, Anna Kaliashvili, Kristabelle Ann Gorbatuk
Many Blessed Years!

The Mysteries of Confession & Communion in the Month of August

- If you are a regular communicant on Sundays and have not been to Confession anytime after Pascha (April 12), to continue to receive Holy Communion, you must go to Confession in the month of August. This includes children of Confession age.
- The Dormition Lent is a favored time for everyone to avail themselves of Holy Confession and Communion.

Thanks to the Kita Family

Our thanks to the Kitas' for hosting our annual parish picnic. It was a wonderful day and happy former parishioners joined us. Check the website and Face Book for photos.

For Sale At The Vestibule Stand

A new supply of Orthodox Prayer Books and the Divine Liturgy Books are again in stock.

From the Life of St. Paisios of Mount Athos, Greece (+1994)

"We can't limp in the spiritual life; we can't just stay in the hallway. If you are in the hallway, you'll never get to God's living room" – that is Paradise.

"I love everyone the same way I loved my family. I feel like they are all my brothers and sisters."

Being Perfect vs. Perfectionism

Fr. George Morelli

"Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mat. 5:48)

These words that Jesus Christ gave to his apostles, disciples and the multitude on the Mount must be taken to heart by every follower of Jesus Christ. We can look to the Church Fathers to help us understand what "being perfect" really means. The Fathers were surprisingly realistic in understanding the rich spiritual meaning of these words. They were far from the modern meaning of the term; where "being perfect" is understood as "perfectionism" and regarded as a cognitive-emotional aberration by mental health clinicians and researchers.

St. Diadochos of Phototiki tells us:

For what is considered perfection in a pupil is far from perfect when compared with the richness of God, who instructs us in love which would still seek to surpass itself, even if we were able to climb to the top of Jacob's ladder by our own efforts.

St. Makarios of Egypt states:

Thus aspiring to perfection two of the best things come about, provided we struggle diligently and unceasingly we seek to attain this perfect measure and growth; and we are not conquered by vanity, but look upon ourselves as petty and mean because we have not yet reached our goal.

St. Makarios again warns us:

Hence, if we do not know how to discriminate, we fancy that we have attained something great and begin to think highly of ourselves, deluding ourselves that we have reached the final stage of purification, though this is very far from the truth.

Ultimately perfection does not come from the individual but from God. "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory in Christ. Jesus, after you have suffered a little, will Himself perfect you and confirm you and establish you" (1 Peter 5:10).

The psychological model of perfection is very different. Individuals suffering from this malady are motivated by a fear of failure and sense of duty. They strive to be in first place in all manner of endeavours but their accomplishments never seem to satisfy them. They believe there is a special quality to acquiring "perfection." The flawless expression of particular characteristic such as intelligence or the mistake-free application of a specific skill is the only way to earn self esteem and achieve the sense of being special.

This perception may lead individuals to intuit that they have mastery over their emotions and behavior. When unforeseen consequences challenge these unrealistic perceptual intuitions the person becomes self-critical and experiences anxiety and hostility and becomes vulnerable to depression, disgrace, even suicide, through the collapse of self-esteem (Burns, 1989). Slaney and his colleagues (Grzegorek, Slaney, Franze and Rice 2004) add that patients who sense a discrepancy between their unrealistic standards of perfection and their actual accomplishments are most vulnerable to the delirious effects of self-criticism.

This problem is addressed in scripture and by the Fathers. St Matthew records the dialogue between Jesus and His disciples: "Who then can be saved?"; asked the disciples. "And Jesus beholding, said to them: With men this is impossible: but with God all things are possible." What a rock of assurance to all Christians in their struggle to attain "perfection" which is holiness, union with God or *theosis*.

Perfection comes from God. We have to trust in Him. To think we have attained perfection or can attain it on our own is an unrealistic delusion, vanity. Our goal of union with Christ can only come as a gift, as a grace from God. *Theosis* is a movement toward the energies of God, and not his essence (Chryssavgis, 2004). Paraphrasing the words of St. Maximus the Confessor, from Him we come and toward Him we tend.

Theosis is not static, it is movement. *Theosis* is a process that is eternal starting with our new-birth at Baptism, continuing through cooperation with the grace of God -- a grace that extends through our lifetime into eternity. Because we are finite and created (creatures) we can only move toward Him because of His grace because He is infinite through eternity and without end.

Trust and patience are two pillars of our journey to "perfection." In psychological terms patience is attained by letting go of our "unrealistic urgent demanding expectations" and substituting reality the way it actually is. Trust in God and His Divine Providence becomes a powerful "technique" to challenge self-created urgencies and helps heal the malady of perfectionism.

The Church is crucial in this healing. St. Irenaeus said that, "Where the Church is there is the Spirit, and where the Spirit is there is the Church." Thus we have tradition, scripture in tradition (Breck, 2001) the Divine Liturgy, the holy mysteries (e.g. repentance, reception of the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ) the other prayers of the church, the writings of our holy fathers and mothers of the church, the teachings of our bishops and priests, the holy icons and architecture of our buildings and the love we are to have between one another.

St. Paul reminded the Galatians of the fruits and the virtues involved in this journey: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, modesty and self continence (Gal 5: 23-24). We cannot love God, if we do not love man (1 John). One spiritual director taught that we can only love God to the extent we love the person we *hate* the most.

Ultimately the spiritual cure for perfectionism is given to us by St. Paul: "For if anyone thinks of himself as something, whereas he is nothing he deceives himself" (Gal 6:3). "God forbid I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world is crucified in me" (Gal 6:14). Here lies true perfection.



All my happiness and unhappiness are in the thoughts and desires of my heart. If the thoughts of my heart are in accord with God's truth, with the will of God, then I am at rest, filled with divine light, joy and blessedness; if not, I am uneasy, filled with spiritual darkness that corrupts the soul, with heaviness and despondency. If I replace the false and ungodly thoughts of my heart by true and godly ones, then rest, blessedness and joy return.

Saint John of Kronstadt

On Reading the Gospel

While reading the Gospel do not seek enjoyment; do not seek ecstasies; do not seek glittering thoughts; seek to behold infallibly Holy Truth.

Do not be content only with fruitless reading of the Gospel; strive to fulfil its commandments; read it through deeds. This is a book of life, and one must read it through living.

Do not think that without reason the most sacred of books, the Four Gospels, begins with the Gospel according to Matthew and ends with the Gospel according to John. Matthew teaches more how to fulfil God's will, and his precepts are especially suited for those starting on God's path; John expounds the way of God's uniting with man renewed by the commandments, which is accessible only to one who has been successful along God's path.

Opening the book, the Holy Gospel, for reading, remember that it will determine your eternal lot. We will be judged according to it, and depending upon what we were here on earth with respect to it, we will acquire either eternal blessedness or eternal punishment (John 12:48).

God revealed His will to an insignificant speck of dust - man! The book in which this great and all-holy will is set forth is in your hands. You can accept and you can reject the will of the Creator and your Saviour, just as you please. Your eternal life and eternal death are in your hands; consider, then, how careful, how prudent, you should be. Do not play with your eternal destiny!

In contrition of heart pray to the Lord, that He may open your eyes to behold the wonders concealed in His law (Ps. 118:18), which is the Gospel. As your eyes are opened, a miraculous healing of the soul is perceived, accomplished by the Word of God. The healing of bodily illnesses was only an evidence of the healing of the soul, evidence for carnal people, for minds made blind by sensuality (Luke 5:24).

Read the Gospel with the greatest reverence and attention. Do not consider anything in it of little importance, little worthy of consideration. Every iota of it emits a gleam of life. Neglect of life is death.

Reading about the lepers, paralysed, blind, cripples, and demon-possessed whom the Lord healed, consider how your soul, bearing many various wounds of sin and being in captivity to the demons, is like these sick ones. Learn from the Gospel to have faith that, having healed them, the Lord will heal you also, if you will diligently implore Him for your healing.

Acquire such a state of mind that you may be capable of receiving healing. Those capable of receiving it are aware of their sinfulness and have determined to abandon it (John 9:39, 41). The righteous man who is prideful, i.e. the sinner who does not see his own sinfulness, has no need and no use for the Saviour (Mat. 9:13).

Seeing one's sins, seeing that fallen state in which the entire human race is found, is a special gift of God. Solicit this gift for yourself, and the book of the Heavenly Physician, the Gospel, will be more understandable for you.

Truly strive that the Gospel might be adopted by your intellect and heart, that your intellect, so to say, might swim in it, live in it; and then your activity also will easily come into accord with the Gospels. One can attain to this by unceasing, reverent reading and study of the Gospel.

Saint Pachomius the Great, one of the most famous of the ancient Fathers, knew the Holy Gospel by heart and, according to a revelation from God, charged his disciples with the unfailing duty of learning it. In this way the Gospel accompanied them everywhere, constantly guided them.

Even at the present, what reason could there be for the Christian educator not to beautify the memories of innocent children with the Gospel rather than clutter it with Aesop's fables and other trivialities.

What happiness, what richness - committing the Gospel to memory! One cannot foresee the upheavals and calamities which can happen to us during the course of our earthly life. The Gospel, committed to memory, is read by the blind, accompanies the prisoner to jail, speaks with the labourer in the field watered by his perspiration, directs the judge at the very time of his officiating, guides the merchant in his marketing, cheers up the sick in times of wearisome sleeplessness and distressing loneliness.

Do not dare to interpret the Gospel and other books of Holy Scripture yourself. The Scriptures were uttered by the holy Prophets and Apostles, uttered not at their own will, but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:21). Is it not foolish then to interpret them at your own will?

The Holy Spirit, speaking the Word of God through the Prophets and Apostles, interpreted it through the Holy Fathers. Both the Word of God and the interpretation of it are the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Orthodox Church accepts only this one interpretation! Her true children accept only this one interpretation!

He who explains the Gospel and all Scriptures at his own will by this very act rejects its interpretation by the Holy Fathers, by the Holy Spirit. He who rejects the interpretation of Scripture by the Holy Spirit, beyond all doubt, also rejects the Holy Spirit Itself.

And so the word of God, the word of salvation, becomes, for audacious (fearless) interpreters, the stench of death, a two-edged sword with which they slay themselves unto eternal ruin (II Peter 3:16; II Cor. 2:15,16). With this sword Arius, Nestorius, Eutyches, and the other heretics slew themselves for eternity, having fallen into blasphemy through wilful and audacious interpretation of Scripture.

But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word (Isaiah 66:2), saith the Lord. Be such in regard to the Gospel and the Lord Who is present in it.

Abandon sinful life; abandon earthly inclinations and delights; deny your own soul; then the Gospel will become intelligible and accessible for you.

He that hateth his soul in this world, said the Lord - the soul, for which, since the fall, devotion to sin has become as if natural, as if its way of life - shall keep it unto life eternal (John 12:25). For the one who loves his soul, who does not decide on denial of self, the Gospel is closed: he reads the words, but the word of life, as Spirit, remains behind an impenetrable veil for him.

When the Lord was on the earth in His all-holy flesh, many saw Him and at the same time did not see. What use is it when a man looks with his bodily eyes, which he has in common with the beasts, but does not see anything with the eyes of the soul, with the mind and heart? And even now many read the Gospel every day and at the same time have never read it, do not know it at all.

The Gospel, said a certain holy desert-dweller, is read by a pure mind; it is understood in the measure of fulfilment of its commandments in one's very deeds. But it is impossible to obtain for oneself a precise and perfect opening up of the Gospel by one's own efforts: this is a gift of Christ.

The Holy Spirit, having taken up His abode in His true and faithful servant, makes him into both a perfect reader and true doer of the Gospel.

The Gospel is the portrayal of the nature of the new man, who is *the Lord from heaven* (I Cor. 15:47). This new man is God in his nature. His holy generation of men believing on Him and transfigured according to Him, He makes into gods by grace.

You, who wallow in the stinking, filthy swamp of sin, rejoice in it! Raise up your heads; look at the clear sky: there is your place! God gives you the dignity of gods; you, rejecting this dignity, chose for yourselves another: the dignity of beasts - even the most impure ones. Come to your senses! Abandon the stinking swamp; cleanse yourself with confession of sins; wash yourself with tears of repentance; beautify yourself with tears of compunction; raise yourself from the earth; ascend into heaven: the Gospel will lift you up there. *While ye have light - the Gospel, in which Christ is hidden - believe in the Light, that ye may be the children of Light, of Christ (John 12:36).*

