

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF JULY 26, 2015

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

SUNDAY/JULY 26

8th Sunday After Pentecost

St. Jacob of Alaska (+1864)

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour & Preparation of Church for
painting this week

WDNESDAY/JULY 29

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

THURSDAY/JULY 30

6:00p.m. Pirohi Making at Holy Ghost
Church, Manville

SATURDAY/AUGUST 1

9:00a.m. Restoration of Church Furnishings
after week of painting
5:30p.m. Vigil; Confessions

SUNDAY/AUGUST 2

9th Sunday After Pentecost

Translation of relics of St. Stephen

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

HOLY DORMITION LENT:

A two week Fast in honor the Mother of God, honoring her repose, resurrection and ascension into heaven; is observed August 1st thru August 14th. A Fast is observed from meat, dairy, fish, wine and oil. Your parish wall calendar indicate days that permit fish, wine or oil. The Fast ends, after the Divine Liturgy on the Feast of the Dormition, August 15th.



Reading helps prayer, and prayer helps reading
(St. Isaac)

Offerings Week of July 26

Olive Oil: in memory of Michael, Justina, Rosalia; Anastasia and William in memory of Vaschen and Emilia; in memory of Clara and John.

Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

Aug.22 40th Day for Charles Specian
July 26, 1917 Michael Kohut
July 26, 1956 Michael Evanoff
July 26, 1977 Clara Bartushak
July 26, 1977 Peter Cresina
July 28, 1946 Sophie Sufrinko
July 28, 1985 Euzebius Tarangul
July 28, 1999 Nicholas Barnosky
July 29, 1980 Helen Monko
Aug.01, 1954 Nicholas Lebedz
Aug.01, 2005 John Rosocha

Coffee Hour Hosts

July 26 Mantzafos, Sokol, Arpastean,
Nasledysheva & Sarchisian
Aug. 02 (fast foods) Dunaenko, Wypych,
Chirnoaga, Moldoveanu & Nemes
Aug. 09 (fast foods) Peterson, Bakaletz,
Mattei & Erkman

Usher Schedule

July 26 Edward S. & Kahka K.
Aug. 02 Timothy S. & Peter B.
Aug. 09 Jerome S. & Adrian M.

Counters

July 26 Ekaterini M. & Ciprian C.
Aug.02 Rebecca O. & Edward S.
Aug 09 Lisa Keller & Daniel T.

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!

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.
- Extended Confession Times in addition to Saturday evenings: Wed. Aug 5: 3:00p.m. and 8:45p.m.; Mon. Aug. 10: 7:00p.m.; Wed. Aug. 12: 3:00p.m. and 7:00p.m.; Fri., Aug. 14: 8:45p.m. Other times by appointment you may make.

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)

- "What hinders spiritual progress is that people focus on other things instead of what benefits them spiritually."
- "The entire foundation of the spiritual life is for people to think of others and put themselves last, not to think of themselves. When we put ourselves in another person's shoes and understand them, then we are Christ's kin."
- "We should prefer afflictions and see them as better than pleasures. A lot of times bitter medicines are better than sweet ones, because they heal. Sufferings give birth to true joy."
- "God doesn't let something bad happen unless something good will come out of it, or unless it'll at least prevent something even worse from happening."



INSTRUCTIONS OF ST. JOHN CASSIAN (+430)

On Pursuing discretion.

With every effort, the good of discretion must be acquired by the virtue of humility, which can keep both extremes from hurting us. It is an old saying that extremes meet. For example, the extreme of fasting comes to the same end as overeating does, and the excessive prolongation of a vigil is as detrimental as the torpor of a heavy sleep is. For it is inevitable that a person who has been weakened by an excess of abstinence will return to that state in which a negligent person is caught because of his heedlessness.

Thus we frequently see that people who could not be spiritually deceived by gluttony have been overcome by immoderate fasting and, on account of their weakness, have fallen into the very passion which they had conquered. Unreasonable vigils and night watches, too, have overcome people whom sleep was unable to get the better of.

Therefore, according to the Apostle, "by the arms of righteousness on the right hand and on the left" we must be made our way temperately and tread between either extreme under the guidance of discretion in such a fashion that we shall neither let ourselves be snatched from the path of fasting which is in keeping with the tradition, nor on the other hand, by harmful carelessness, fall into the desires of gormandizing and of the stomach.

The 3 Sources of our thoughts.

We should know that the three sources of our thoughts are: From God, from the devil and from ourselves.

1) They are from God when He deigns to visit us by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, which raises us up to a higher level of progress in the spiritual life; and when we have made little gain or have acted lazily and been overcome and He chastens us with a most salutary compunction, and when He opens to us the heavenly sacraments and changes our orientation to better acts and to a better will.

2) And from the devil, a whole series of thoughts is born, when he attempts to subvert us both by delight in wickedness and by hidden snares, fraudulently passing off evil things for good with the most subtle finesse and transforming himself for us into an angel of light.

3) Thoughts also come from us, when we spontaneously remember things that we are doing or have done or have heard.

We should be continually aware of this 3 fold distinction and with a wise discretion examine all the thoughts that emerge in our heart, first tracing their origins and causes and their authors, so that, in accordance with the status of whoever is suggesting them, we may be able to consider how we should approach them.



On the general norm for fasting and eating

But this is the general norm for fasting - that each person concede himself as much as his strength, the state of his body, and his age require for sustaining the body and not for satisfying the desire to fill himself up. For whoever acts inconsistently, at one time tightening his stomach with the dryness of fasting and at another time bloating himself with excess of food, will in either case do considerable damage.

Many are called but few are chosen

For although 633,000 armed men were said to have left Egypt, no more than 2 of these entered the Promised Land.

FROM: "THE MYSTERY OF THE WONDER-WORKER OF OSTROG"
SOME EDIFYING ACCOUNTS TOLD BY A SERBIAN MONK



A MIRACLE OF ST. BASIL OF OSTROG

"Did you know that when people cannot come here on the great church Feasts, they often climb the nearest hill or mountain from which the Upper Monastery can be seen and facing it, they pray to St. Basil? A certain Arso Payovich from Herzegovina wrote sometime in the 1880's that if a Montenegrin happens to be somewhere in the vicinity of the Ostrog cliff at sunrise or sunset, he or she will always turn in the direction of the reliquary of St. Basil, glory and mercy be upon him, and pray to him. When people are too far from Ostrog to be able to see it, they turn towards the hills that stand between them and Ostrog, they cross themselves and pray to God and St. Basil, His Wonder-worker! An archivist of the Ostrog monastery in the 1930's, Elijah Zlatichanin from Podgoritsa, documented the case of the miraculous healing of a five-year old boy with withered legs. All the doctors had given up on the little boy, including the famous Dr. Hadzipoulis, a friend and neighbor of Elijah's. They said that the nerves in his legs had completely died and that the child's legs were permanently shriveled. According to them, he would never be able to walk. Elijah had even seen the child with his mother on one occasion when he was visiting his doctor friend in his office. A year later, Elijah was in town walking when he saw the same woman leading the child by the hand. The child was walking quite normally. He stopped them and asked the woman if this was the same child she had brought into Dr. Hadzipoulis' office the year before. The woman, Yovanka, answered that it was. Then she turned in the direction of Ostrog, crossed herself and said: 'We went to Ostrog, to St. Basil. It was God who helped my child, God and His wonder-worker, St. Basil, who helps everyone!' Then Elijah, although he was standing in the middle of the street, also turned towards Ostrog, took off his hat and crossed himself in prayer to God and St. Basil. That's how it was in those days..."

ANOTHER MIRACLE OF ST. BASIL OF OSTROG

"There is another story which the priest John Boshkovich from Orja Luka told about the healing of the wife of the chief director of the Taxation Office for Herzegovina from Mostar, an Austrian. A great crowd had gathered at Ostrog for the Feast of the Pentecost, among them the Metropolitan Mitrophan of Tsetinye. Suddenly a group of people on horses appeared. On one of the horses was a woman, tied up and supported by men on each side of the horse. She was totally insane. The visitors asked Father John what to do, and he told them to go to the Metropolitan. The Metropolitan appointed Father John to take care of them while they were at the monastery. The woman's name was Milchika and she was Roman Catholic. Father John took them to the reliquary and read prayers for her, after which she had to be locked up in a cell. She stayed in the cell for three days, making a dreadful racket, smashing things and attacking anyone who came in to bring her food. They repeated the prayers twice more, taking her each time before the relics of St. Basil. On the third day they noticed that she had calmed down. They opened the cell and found her sitting, quiet as a lamb. She asked them where she was. When they told her, she burst into tears and thanked God and Saint Basil! Later this lady came back to Ostrog with her husband with a generous donation for the monastery."

Self-Reproach and Self-Hatred, Humility and Shame

For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter. 2 Cor 7:10f

Self-reproach, self-condemnation (in the right way) are fundamental principles of Orthodox spiritual literature, the writings of the Fathers. In our culture, 21st century America, the principles of self-reproach and condemnation are entirely misunderstood. Instead of self-reproach leading to godly sorrow which “produces repentance leading to salvation,” it produces worldly sorrow, despair, death. Instead of leading a person to humility, which is the aim of the spiritual literature, the inexperienced readers beat themselves up and become self-obsessed in an unhealthy way.

Self-hatred, toxic shame, and self-pity are epidemic in our society. When 60% of marriages break up, the majority of children come from broken homes. This leads to tremendous anxiety and sense of abandonment, predisposing them to self-hatred and toxic shame. Add abuse and neglect to that, also epidemic in our society. The result is a great number of people who are broken and need to be healed. Consumed with self-loathing they are unable to enter into healthy relationships with God or with others, constantly fearing rejection and rejecting love. The spiritual literature demands self-reproach for one’s sins and recognition of one’s unworthiness. This gets misunderstood as being unable to be loved and accepted by God and others. Because of their predisposition of mind, it confirms to them that they are unlovable, worthless, and cannot be saved. This leads to mounting despair.

The spiritual literature of the Greek Fathers presumes, for the most part, that we are ruled by pride and vainglory. Presuming this, it tries to knock down our self-esteem a few notches. It tries to provoke godly sorrow, repentance, diligence and zeal. It also presumes a high level of spiritual maturity. For us beginners in the spiritual life, only barely away from the world, this is very strong medicine.

One suffering from self-hatred may be proud and arrogant in his behavior, but this is usually a rather thinly disguised cover-up for deep insecurity, a defensive posture. His self-esteem is already so low that the literature only reinforces his self-condemnation as a means of self-torture. The problem is not with the literature itself. It is simply the wrong medicine for one suffering with self-hatred.

One of the worst translation mistakes in contemporary Orthodox literature, at least for American English, is the use of “self-esteem” for *kenodoxia*—which literally means “vainglory.” Reading these spiritual texts, one can come to the conclusion that to have self-esteem is evil, sinful. This is quite wrong. One must have an authentically honest and true vision of oneself in order to have an authentic spiritual life. We must know that God loves us, despite our sins. This is real self-



esteem, and it is also humility. Hypocritical self-abnegation, false humility, is as transparent as hypocritical arrogance. Both are types of vainglory, both are self-deception; and neither can deceive anyone else! What is called for is authentic humility, not low self-esteem.

Humility is not about self-condemnation to the point of despair. St. Silouan's "keep your mind in hell and despair not," is about the right kind and context of self-condemnation: one that is always conscious of God's forgiveness and mercy, while never trusting in our own self-righteousness. We condemn ourselves to hell; but God does not. There is an exquisite balance. But no despair. Here is humility: an honest self-appraisal of our own sinfulness, unworthiness, impurity and brokenness. But always in the context of trust and hope in God, for "what is impossible with men is possible with God." (cf. Matt 19:26). It is a healthy shame before God, not the toxic shame of despair.

Self-hatred and self-loathing, self-pity and self-condemnation in despair, produce a false humility. They focus one entirely in oneself, leading to the absence of the awareness of God and of other people. They may produce a semblance of a humble attitude, just as abuse may humiliate one into submission. But there is no humility in that either. These close us off to God and the other. True humility opens us up to God and the other, in love and thanksgiving. True humility is the fruit of godly grief, of true compunction.

Abuse, whether physical or emotional; handicaps a person, catapulting him into despair and self-hatred, self-enclosure and self-pity. It traps a person in toxic shame, low self-esteem, and a kind of paralysis. While the shame of having our shortcomings exposed to us can be very valuable, using shame and abuse to degrade and bring someone into submission only adds anger, fear and alienation against the perpetrator to the shame and self-pity of the victim. They may cooperate; but it is not obedience in love. This pain is not compunction—though God can certainly use it as well. It leads to revenge and despair.

There is no fear in humility. Humility is totally open, accepting, reliant not on oneself, but on God who works through us, despite ourselves. The humble fear of God is not a fear of punishment, or fear of not being rewarded. The true fear of God, which is true humility, fears only to offend the love of the Father.

When we are trapped in self-hatred and toxic shame, we are trapped in spiritual immaturity, in fear of rejection and constant self-punishment and worldly sorrow. True spiritual maturity can only be attained through openness to God and the other; self-hatred encloses us within ourselves. We can overcome self-hatred, with lots of help, through learning to accept the love of God and of others. The heavy doses of self-reproach come naturally, but need to be tempered with the remembrance of the mercy and forgiveness of God. Then, growing beyond self-centered immaturity, we can accept the love of God and of others. Worldly sorrow and despair can be transformed into godly compunction. The recognition of sin is the same. It is the context that is different: hope and love, reliance on God and not on one's self.

Abbot Jonah

