

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

605 Washington Avenue, Manville, New Jersey 08835-1856

Voice: 908-685-1452 Email: frjames@ssppoc.org

Parish Website: www.ssppoc.org Diocese of NY-NJ: www.nynjoca.org

Face Book: "Friends of Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church"

BULLETIN OF NOVEMBER 1, 2015

SUNDAY/NOVEMBER 1

Synaxis of Holy Healers

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
with Prayers for Those in Healing Ministries
Coffee Hour

SATURDAY/NOVEMBER 7

9:30a.m. Akathist to Our Lord; Confession
5:30p.m. Vigil; Confession

SUNDAY/NOVEMBER 8

23rd Sunday After Pentecost Archangel Michael & Bodiless Powers

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour
6:30p.m. Compline and Akathist to
St. Nectarios and Anointing with oil from tomb
(November 9th – St. Nectarios of Aegina)



THE CHURCH AND MISSION

By Fr. Alexander Schmemmann

To recover the missionary dimension of the Church is today's greatest imperative. We have to recover a very basic truth: that the Church is essentially Mission, that the very roots of her life are in the commandment of Christ: "Go Ye therefore and teach all nations" (Matt. 28:19). A Christian community that would lose this missionary zeal and purpose, that would become selfish and self-centered, that would limit itself to "satisfying the spiritual needs of its members", that would identify itself completely with a nation, a

society, a social or ethnic group – is on its way to spiritual decadence and death, because the essential spiritual need of a Christian is precisely that of sharing the life and the Truth with as many men as possible and ultimately with the whole world. Mission thus is the organic need and task of the Church in the world, the real meaning of Church's presence in history between the first and the second advents of her Lord, or, in other terms, the meaning of Christian history. Obviously not all members of the Church can go and preach in the literal sense of the word. But all can have a concern for the missionary function of the Church, feel responsible for it, help and support it. In this respect each diocese, each parish and each member of the Church are involved in the missionary ministry.

Offerings Week of November 1

Olive Oil: in memory of Michael, John, Rosalia, Alexandra and Anastasia; in memory of John; for the health and protection of John (birthday).

Wine: for the salvation, protection and health of Gabriel (birthday).

The Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

Nov. 01, 1990 Mary Davidovich
Nov. 01, 1977 John Rosocha
Nov. 01, 1999 Theodore Gorbatuk
Nov. 02, 1967 Fr. Cornelius Svigoon
(rector 1929)
Nov. 04, 1992 Mary Carmon
Nov. 05, 1972 Helen Lopatka
Nov. 05, 1980 Joseph Lazorisak
Nov. 06, 1963 Helen Bogush
Nov. 07, 1971 Katherine Yarik
Nov. 07, 1971 Anna Barna

Coffee Hour Hosts

Nov. 01 Dunaenko, Wypych, Chirnoaga,
Moldoveanu & Nemes
Nov. 08 Peterson, Bakaletz, Mattei & Erkman
(Fasting Foods: Nov. 15 thru Dec. 24th)
Nov. 15 Kita, Nevitt, Keller & Turri

Usher Schedule

Nov. 01 Timothy S. & Peter B.
Nov. 08 Jerome S. & Adrian M.
Nov. 15 Dennis F. & Peter B.

Counters

Nov. 01 Rebecca O. & Edward S.
Nov. 08 Lisa K. & Daniel T.
Nov. 15 Inga G. & Peter B.

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. The average increase for the last 8 months was a base of only \$1.61. This is far short of the need.

100th Anniversary On-Line Photos & Video

May be viewed on the parish website, the diocesan website and Face Book.

Giving Bean: Great Coffee For Great Causes – Sale Now Underway!

Coffees, teas, cocoa & chai, shortbread cookies. Please return your orders by Nov. 14th. Flyers & order sheets are on the vestibule stand.

NY-NJ Diocese Annual Girls' Retreat – Nov. 13-15 in Garrison, NY

Flyers and registration forms are posted on the bulletin board in the social center. This is a great opportunity for the young girls to gather. Deadline is November 2nd.

A Thank You!

Fr. James expresses his thanks to all for your greetings, prayers and expressions of kindness on my recent names day celebration. Your continued prayers all year are requested.

A Reminder About Prayers for Travelling

If you are travelling and wish a prayer for a safe journey, it is the custom to offer this prayer after the Divine Liturgy. When venerating the Cross, let Fr. James know you wish this prayer and wait at the Icon, "Joy of All That Sorrow." Once the Post-Communion Prayers are finished, this short prayer with the sprinkling of holy water takes place.

The Calendar

- Nov. 10/Tues. – NY-NJ Diocesan Assembly in So. River, NJ
- Nov. 15/Sun. – Beginning of 40 Day Nativity Lent
- Nov. 19/Thurs. – Parish Council Meeting
- Nov. 21/Sat. – Feast of Entrance Into Temple
- Nov. 26/Thurs. – Thanksgiving Day and Akathist to God, Glory For All Things.
- Dec. 06/Sun. – Feast of St. Nicholas with Festal Luncheon and Showing of Film, "100th Anniversary of Ss. Peter & Paul" (Film 1 hour and 20 minutes).
- Dec. 12/Sat. 10:30a.m. Church Cleaning
- Dec. 13/Sun. Christmas Cookie Walk

How Does the Church Grow?

How Does the Church Grow?

This question is at the heart of any parish community struggling with stagnant plateaued growth or actual numerical decline.

Especially if your church is in "plateau" (i.e., no net growth) mode, you may be making new members, but not necessarily growing.

While the Holy Scriptures make very clear that it is God who grows the Church (Matthew 16:18; I Corinthians 3:6), the key to understanding parish growth is to identify the processes over which the parish has the most control and influence for parish health and growth.

traditional childbearing patterns are radically altered from past experience. More than ever, we need to keep our young people engaged in the Church, encouraging them to marry in the Faith, and have their children baptized and raised in our parishes.

Discussion: Take a look at the number of births and baptisms recorded in the parish over the last five years. How do those figures compare to the number of funerals as well as the number of people who have moved away? Are we replacing those that are leaving? Which of these "life events" – births, deaths, and moves – do we have control over?

"We Need More Members!"

In order to begin a discussion about bringing new people into the parish, let's first consider the three ways (and the **only** three ways) parishes can grow:

1. **Births** (leading to infant baptisms)
2. **People moving in and out of the parish** (Immigration and Transfer Membership)
3. **Conversion**

Births

In decades past, we could anticipate that our parish boys marry parish girls, and they have lots of babies that Father baptizes and incorporates into the life of parish. That may have been the norm until recently, but it's just not happening that way anymore. Our parish boys are marrying Irish girls, or our parish girls are marrying Italian boys, the wedding may or may not take place in the Orthodox Church, and the family pressures from all sides may often result in the children not being baptized for some time, if at all. Combine this with the decision of couples to have fewer children, and parish growth rates based on



People Moving In and Out of the Parish

Immigration and membership transfers – the transfer of one demographic group, family or person from one church in one area to another church in another area – are not, strictly speaking, church growth. Father Thomas Hopko used to talk about this as moving “From the hills of Carpatho-Russia to the hills of Pennsylvania.” Or, nowadays, from the hills of Pennsylvania to Florida, Texas or Arizona.



And what immigration patterns and pressures can give to a church, immigration patterns and pressures can take away: Greek parishes are already experiencing reverse immigration in many places across the country. The Slavic people whom many OCA and ROCOR/MP parishes enjoy seeing coming into their churches now may or may not necessarily stay. The simple point here is this: just as we cannot rely on marriages and children's baptisms to grow our churches, nor can we assume that immigration and transfers due to moves or retirement will guarantee a steady and growing parish census.

Discussion: How does the presence of recent immigrants influence the life of our parish? Are we taking specific steps to welcome them and to encourage them to become involved in the ongoing life of our parish family?

Conversion



And then there's the 2,000 year-old method the Church has always known: **conversion**. So, in order to understand further how people (non- and lapsed Orthodox, “Nones”, non-religious, etc.) might begin to consider the Faith, and therefore joining our

Orthodox parish, we need to look at how people typically engage with a faith community. In the coming issues of *Beyond the Plateau*, we will take some time to explore these approaches.

Discussion Questions: How many adults have converted in our parish in the last five years? When was the last time an adult chrismation was done in our parish? List the reasons they say they converted, and the factors you think inspired them to become Orthodox. Are these conditions still present? What attracted them to our parish? Did they come even without intentional outreach by the parish, or did the parish do something deliberate that brought those people to church, and ultimately to the Faith?

Spiritual Healing: The Saints

Somewhere between a total reliance on rational medicine and an understanding of illness as the direct consequence of demonic influences lies the main realm of the Orthodox church's involvement with the curing of illness. A good name for it is "spiritual healing." In this realm the saints and the liturgical life of the church play important roles. For most people, it is precisely in these two areas that the domain of the church and the need for healing and curing meet.

THE UNMERCENARY SAINT-PHYSICIANS

Among the "nine orders of saints," such as the apostles, martyrs, confessors, and Fathers of the Church, is found the class of the "unmercenary saint-physicians" (the holy *anargyroi*, literally, the "silverless" saints). *The Priest's Service Book* mentions several of these "wonder-working Unmercenarys": Kosmas and Damian, Kyros and Ioannes, Sampson and Diomedes, Mokius and Akinatus, Thalalaius, Hermolaus, and Panteleimon. All these saints seem to have had some kind of medical training. One of the most popular was St. Panteleimon, martyred under Emperor Maximian about the year 305, according to tradition. It is believed that he was born in Nicomedeia, a city in the northern part of Asia Minor, near the Black Sea. As a youth he bore the name Pantoleon. His father, Eustorgius, was a pagan, while his mother, Euboula, was born into a Christian family. It was she who encouraged him to become a Christian, which he did under the tutelage of the priest Hermolaus.

Panteleimon had studied medicine under the well-known physician Euphrosynus and was well-known for the healing art when he was baptized. He quickly obtained the reputation of an "unmercenary healer," a man of philanthropy toward the poor. The traditional story of the saint's martyrdom incorporates the healing dimension of his ministry. The saint is credited with healing a blind man, but when the healing comes to the attention of the emperor, he first kills the man who has been healed and then brings martyrdom to the saint by torturing him and finally having his head cut off. One of the hymns of his feast, held annually on July 27, characteristically expresses the pious expectations of the faithful: "Streams of grace and healing freely flow forth as from a great fountain upon all that seek for the aid of Panteleimon, the godly-wise physician. Come, therefore, ye that thirst for strength and health, be ye filled." As a healer, he is "an imitator of the Merciful One," but his powers are not his own, for he is "one who received from Him [Christ] the grace of healing."

The physician-saints are readily available to heal those who suffer from illnesses. As with many classes of saints, their hymns have become formalized and repeat similar phrases; they give evidence of a coherent attitude. Those of Sts. Kosmas and Damian, who are commemorated on November 1 each year, serve as an example:



Ss. Kosmas & Damian

Living humbly on earth, . . . you were granted great gifts! Going everywhere to heal the sick . . . heal now our sufferings.

You kept the purity of your souls stainless, opposing material desires . . . you require no gold when healing the sick. . . .

With Christ always working within you . . . you work miracles in the world by healing the sick . . . receiving gifts from Christ our Savior, who grants us great mercy.

. . . freely you have received, freely give to us.

We see here an undercurrent of opposition to the practitioners of rational medicine who refused to treat those unable to pay. In such situations the poor found that their only recourse was the unmercenary physician-saint. Many honored such saints, as witnessed by not only the many churches of St. Panteleimon, but most significantly, the richly endowed Russian monastery of St. Panteleimon on the Holy Mountain Athos.

Nevertheless, Christ was seen as the source of their healing powers, whether through medicine or prayers. One of the hymns from the services of the physician-saints Cyrus and John, commemorated on January 31, keeps the divine dimension vividly present: "Having received the gift of miracles from divine grace, O Saints, you work wonders unceasingly, cutting out all our diseases and passions by invisible surgery, O divinely wise Cyrus with glorious John. For you are divine healers."

The mention of "passions," a code-word for sinful attitudes and living, indicates that the healing of the physician-saints was not only of the body. So it is that in the dismissal hymn of the service of St. Panteleimon, no mention is made of bodily healing; the petition is that the saint "intercede with the merciful God that He grant unto our souls forgiveness of sins." In another major hymn of the morning service of St. Panteleimon (the Kontakion), he is implored "by thy prayers heal the diseases of our souls." The spiritual and the physical are always in close proximity, even in the case of the physician-saints, who are repeatedly described as pointing to the interrelatedness of the health of body, soul, and spirit, much as does Lederer's fictional bishop-physician.

HEALING THROUGH LIVING SAINTS

A saint does not necessarily require a medical pedigree in order to have healing powers and to gain fame in the church as a healer. On the contrary, the physician-saints are a minority. Many more healings are claimed as a result of the intercessions of other kinds of saints in the life of the church. In fact, one historian of saints indicates that healing is the chief mark of a saint. But even nonmedically trained saints availed themselves of practices from rational medicine in healing those who came to them.

Perhaps the commonest manifestation of holiness is the healing power of the saint. He deals with every physical and mental affliction from constipation to leprosy, cancer and gangrene. Usually he works by touch, often accompanied by prayer. Sometimes prayer alone suffices. Sometimes the holy man works his cure at a distance by sending to the patient something which has been in contact with his person. . . . Often the

healing offered by the saint is contrasted with that of orthodox doctors. It is instantaneous, while theirs is slow, it is painless while theirs involves much discomfort or the agony of surgery without an anesthetic, and so on. But sometimes there seems to be a tacit demarcation agreement between the holy man and the doctor, who send one another suitable patients.

Thus the holy man and the doctor often treated the same patient and even made referrals to one another. According to another historian of saints and medicine in early Byzantine society, "the holy man becomes one healer among many, prominent in the medical landscape of his area, but not, as a source of medicine or medical advice, wholly different from local physicians."

Many stories from the lives of the saints show the wide range of their relationships with rational medicine. In these sources the saints can be depicted as very antagonistic toward rational medicine, as totally independent of it, and sometimes as quite cooperative. The seventh-century *Life of St. Theodore of Sykeon* describes the practice of a popular saint totally untrained in rational medicine.

Again, if any required medical treatment for certain illnesses, or surgery or purging draught or hot springs, this God-inspired man would prescribe the appropriate remedy to each like an experienced doctor trained in the art. He might recommend one to have recourse to surgery and would always state clearly which doctor he should employ. In other cases he would dissuade those who wished to have an operation or to undergo some other medical treatment, and would recommend rather that they should visit hot springs, and would name the springs they should go to.



St. Spyridon

But often the "medicine" consisted of such actions as touching the sick person, praying over him or her, sprinkling dust from around the domicile of the saint, or placing on the sick part a cloth that had been in contact with the saint's body. Faith, prayer, rational medicine, magical practices, intuition, and suggestion all seemed to have been mixed together.

Even in their use of dust and touching and instructions to do certain actions, however, the saints took their model from Christ and the early apostolic tradition as recorded in the Gospels and the Book of Acts. For example, in healing a blind man Jesus "spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man's eyes with clay, saying to him, 'Go wash in the pool of Siloam.' . . . So he went and washed and came back seeing" (John 9:6-7). Also, in the New Testament the faithful are described as approaching the apostles for healing: "they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and pallets, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed" (Acts 5:15-16). The use of articles of clothing for healing purposes is not unknown in the New Testament, either: "God did extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were carried away from his body to the sick, and diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them" (Acts 18:11-12). Yet the same passage sharply distinguishes this practice from "magic arts," which are strongly rejected (Acts 18:18-19). In consequence,

the saint's intercessory activity on the part of the sick was perceived as a continuation of dominical and apostolic traditions.

The most common practice in the stories of the living saints, however, is direct prayer. A sick person is brought to the saint, he prays, and a healing takes place. This procedure clearly continues the tradition of the majority of healings of Christ and the apostles as described in the New Testament. Let one example suffice. According to the editors of his *vita*, St. Nicholas of Sion "flourished in the first half of the sixth century, and like Nicholas of Myra, was active in Lycia; he was abbot of the Monastery of Holy Sion near Myra and was subsequently ordained bishop of Pinara in western Lycia." Among the many healings described in the *Life* is this one:

One day, [there came] a certain woman from the hamlet of Nikapo who was withered from the unclean spirit, and her husband carried her and brought her to the monastery, and he cast her down at the feet of the holy man. The servant of God prayed to God, and the evil spirit withdrew from her, and she was made whole. And from that very hour she went home on her own feet giving thanks to God and to Holy Sion.

A SELECTION OF PRAYERS TO VARIOUS HEALING SAINTS

St. Panteleimon Tone 3

O holy Great-martyr and Healer Panteleimon, interceed with our Merciful God, that He will grant unto our souls, remission of our transgressions.

Ss. Cosmas and Damian Tone 8

O holy unmercenaries and wonderworkers, visit our infirmities, freely you have received, freely give to us.

St. John of Kronstadt Tone 4

O wonderworker living in Christ forever, with love have mercy on those who are in danger. Hear your children who call upon you with faith. Be you compassionate to those who hope for aid from you, O Father John of Kronstadt, our beloved shepherd.

A Prayer for the Healing of A Sick Person

O powerful God, Who orders all things in mercy for the salvation of the Christian race, visit this Thy servant (handmaid) N., who calls upon the name of Thy Christ. Heal him (her) of every illness of flesh and spirit; forgive his (her) sins, and remove far from Thy servant (handmaid) temptations to sin, every trial and every incursion of the enemy. And raise him (her) up from the bed of sinfulness, and establish him (her) in Thy Holy Church in health of soul and body to glorify the name of Thy Christ by good works, together with all the people. For unto Thee do we send up glory, together with Thine unoriginate Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Another Prayer for a Sick Person

O Christ, Who alone art our Defender: Visit and heal Thy suffering servant (handmaid) N., delivering him (her) from sickness and grievous pains. Raise him (her) up that he (she) may sing to Thee and praise Thee without ceasing; through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Thou Who alone lovest mankind.

