

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF DECEMBER 6, 2015



SUNDAY/DECEMBER 6

27th Sunday After Pentecost/ St. Nicholas the Wonderworker

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

12:15p.m. Presentation of the 100th Anniversary Video

MONDAY & WEDNESDAY/DECEMBER 7 & 9

6:00p.m. Christmas Cookie Baking in Upper Hall

TUESDAY/DECEMBER 8

7:00p.m. Compline & Akathist to Icon, "Unexpected Joy"

THURSDAY/DECEMBER 10

6:30p.m. Compline

7-8:30p.m. Adult Study: "Why & How God took on Human Nature"

SATURDAY/DECEMBER 12

St. Spyridon the Wonderworker

9:30a.m. Akathist to St. Spyridon & Anointing with oil from his tomb; Confessions

10:30a.m. General Church Cleaning

12:00p.m. Hall Set-Up for Christmas Cookie Walk

5:30p.m. Vigil; Confessions

SUNDAY/DECEMBER 13

Sunday of the Holy Forefathers/St. Herman of Alaska

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

11:20a.m. Annual Christmas Cookie Walk

Offerings Week of December 6

Olive Oil: in memory of Michael, John, Rosalia, and Anastasia; in memory of Vachsen and Emilia; for the health of Nicholas Mattei (names day); for the health and protection of Gabriel, David-Leonard, David, Maria-Diana and Tabitha

Wine: for the health of Nicole (names day); in honor of St. Nicholas.

Flowers: for the health of Nicholas (names day) in honor of St. Spyridon.

The Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

Dec. 31 40th Day Zinaida Neudachin

Dec. 07, 1929 Felix Kshanovsky

Dec. 07, 1972 Gregory Hriniak

Dec. 07, 1999 Fr. Jaroslav Roman

Dec. 09, 1965 Max Horbel

Dec. 09, 1970 Helen Horbel

Dec. 10, 1946 David Gerasemchuk

Dec. 10, 1956 Anthony Pawlik

Dec. 10, 1988 Michael Sofko

Dec. 10, 2004 Ann Kralovich

Dec. 11, 1961 Paul Romanovich

Dec. 12, 1976 Christian Swidonovich

Coffee Hour Hosts

(Fasting Foods: Nov. 15 thru Dec. 24th)

Dec. 06 Mantzafos, Sokol, Arpastean, Staina Nasledysheva & Sarchisian

Dec. 13 Dunaenko, Wypych, Chirnoaga, Moldoveanu & Nemes

Dec. 20 Peterson, Bakaletz, Mattei & Erkman

Usher Schedule

Dec. 06 Timothy S. & Peter B.

Dec. 13 Jerome S. & Adrian M.

Dec. 20 Dennis F. & Peter B.

Counters

Dec. 06 Rebecca O. & Edward S.

Dec. 13 Lisa K. & Daniel T.

Dec. 20 Inga G. & Peter B.

Names Day Greetings

St. Nicholas/Dec. 6: Nicholas Kita, Nicholas Mattei and Nicholas Oliver
Many Blessed Years!

Nativity Lent – Daily Prayer for Peace

Let us be faithful in this daily prayer. (Yellow sheet on the vestibule stand.)

Nativity Lent Fasting Norms

A fast is observed from meat, dairy, fish, wine and oil products. There are days permitting fish, wine and oil. These days are indicated on your Parish Wall Calendar, the November Printed Calendar and the Calendar on the Parish Website. The Nativity Lent ends after the Divine Liturgy on Dec. 25th.

Lenten Charities Expressions

The Food Baskets every Sunday / Winter Coat Collection / Christmas Greeting Card for the benefit of St. Philaret Charities / Poor Basket by Icon, "Joy of All That Sorrow"

Christmas Cookie Walk – Sign Up Sheet for Bakers

The annual Christmas Cookie Walk will take place on Sunday, Dec. 13th at 11:20a.m. Bakers are sought. Please sign-up at the vestibule stand. For more information please contact Jill at 908-541-9586/jap2002@optonline.net.

The Mysteries of Confession & Communion

The Lenten Season is the appropriate time for receiving the Holy Mysteries. Those that receive Holy Communion on Sundays, be sure you have gone to Confession in this Lenten Time – Nov. 15- Dec. 24. Those that do not ordinarily receive the Holy Gifts, every week, are encouraged to benefit from these Holy Mysteries in this Lenten period.

3 Seeds of Growth for December

- 1) Know something about the life of your Patron saint and the date of your names day.
- 2) Invoke your Patron saint daily, "O Holy (Name) my patron, pray unto God for me."
- 3) "Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises! (Psalm 47). At the Divine Liturgy sing loud/soft the hymns and responses.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF A REAL CHRISTIAN
By Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos

A true member of the Church and a real Christian is the person who has the following attributes:

First, he remains within the Church, without leaving it through atheism or heresy. He is not cut off from this living organism and does not participate in heretical sects. This means that he accepts the faith confessed in the Symbol of Faith absolutely, that he participates in the sacraments of the Church, is sanctified by them and practices asceticism in his personal life so that he will keep God's commandments. He feels that he remains within the Church in order to be saved rather than to save, because the Church does not need saviours.

Second, he feels that he is a son of God, that is, he has a father and is not an orphan. His great Father is God. Yet, the clergy are also fathers, because they are the type and place of Christ's presence. Hence, a real member of the Church is obedient to the bishops, the clergy and has a spiritual father, who guides him in his spiritual life. Of course, he also accepts the teachings of the Holy Fathers of the Church and tries to imitate their life, that is to say, their ascetic practice and witness.

Third, he feels that he belongs to a family, and, therefore, has spiritual brothers and sisters. He is not alone within the Church. This chiefly means that he loves his brothers and sisters. He does not judge them, regardless of the mistakes they may have made and he does not condemn them. He is tolerant and shows forbearance towards their chance weaknesses. In addition, he shows his love in a variety of ways. He participates in their pain and in their joy. The happiness of other people is his own happiness, their sorrow is his own sorrow, their love is a fellowship of love and their faith a unity of faith. He should feel that everything is in common. He should feel that the Church is a family, just as the first Christians felt her to be, according to the description in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:41-47). If he tries to keep God's law, but does not have love, he is not a real Christian; he is a sick member of the Church.

Fourth, in the instance of sin, he follows a therapeutic course of treatment. Man is changeable. This means that he alters and is wounded throughout his life. In consequence, he sins. The Holy Scriptures say, "Who can become clean

from filth? But no-one, even if his life on the earth is only for a day" (Job 14:4-5 *Septuagint*). St. John the Evangelist writes, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).

Sins are not guilty acts or simple rejections of the law; they are first and foremost wounds or sicknesses. The sinner is spiritually sick. Consequently, sin should be encountered within a therapeutic and healing framework. The priest is a healer or doctor, who practices this function in the name of the Great Physician, Christ. He cleans and dresses the wounds, intervenes surgically, if necessary, and in general, heals the wounds. Within this framework, we should look at repentance, confession and the orders of the spiritual father, i.e. what is known as penance. We must repent. We must really feel our fault and our illness, we should want to be cured, and resort to the therapist disclose our illness and reveal all the hidden and concealed points of the sickness. We will then follow the therapeutic advice of the spiritual doctor with zeal and resolve. The Church has the sacrament of repentance and of confession.

In the ancient Church when someone committed a grave sin, i.e. when he fell seriously ill, he was demoted into the order of Catechumens once again. This is why in the Catechumens, the demon possessed and the penitents are all included the category of those being purified. All these people follow an appropriate course of treatment. The sinful and repentant Christians, who have already been baptised, are, of course, not baptised again. However, they had to go through the stage of repentance and feel that the grace of God was working within their hearts again.

When the baptised Christian leaves the Church and falls into heresy, he must then go through a certain procedure before he is re-included within the Church. Repentance was required, as well as the signing of a written declaration (*libellus*), by which he denounced the heresy that he had fallen into, followed by Chrism.

From all this we realise that Baptism alone is not enough; one must also live in accordance with God's commandments in order to become a true member of the Church. If a Christian happens to fall ill, there is a special method through which he will gain his health again.





CONCERNING THE EFFECTS OF RECEIVING THE BODY AND BLOOD OF OUR LORD

There are at least four major benefits which may be expected after partaking of Christ's Body and Blood, namely:

1. Intimate union with Christ through His love.

Through this union we mingle with God and share with Him. As God is love, when we partake of Him through Holy Communion we become partakers of His love. It should be added that these Gifts from God are truly free. He compels no one to accept, just as in true love there is no compulsion, but absolute free to either accept or reject.

2. Strengthening of the body and soul.

Eating ordinary food only nourishes a person's body; but eating Christ's Flesh and Blood strengthens and nourishes both the body and soul. When the soul is nourished, a person is better able to live, grow and develop spiritually. This means that the ability to resist sin is greatly increased, thus enhancing the desire and capacity to be more virtuous, righteous, compassionate and considerate. We can be sure that this is so since Christ said: "I am the bread of life, he who comes to Me shall not hunger and he who believes in Me shall never thirst" (Jn 6:35), and then: "For My Flesh is true food and My Blood is true drink" (Jn 6:55).

With these statements Christ expounded the eternal nourishment value of His Flesh and Blood. Unlike ordinary food which only temporarily strengthens the body, true Divine food strengthens the soul eternally.

The strengthening effect of these Gifts, is another indicator of Christ's great love for us. Christ gave us certain Commandments to follow if we are able to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. Scripture teaches that evil is spread through man by various demonic powers (Eph 6:12). Without Divine intervention man does not have the strength to fight these extremely powerful, fleshless creatures – as Christ said: "...for without Me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5). Man alone does not have the strength to become perfect. Not wishing man to be condemned to hell, Christ nourishes us with His Body

and Blood – giving us a Perfect Food with which to become perfect.

3. Preparation for eternal life with God.

Partaking in Communion prepares us to share with God, an eternally joyful life after the resurrection of the dead. Christ is God and therefore lives forever – by eating His Body and Blood, we are blended with Him and will likewise live forever. This is Christ's promise when He said: "He who eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood has eternal life; and I will raise him up on the last day" (Jn 6:54).

This "life" that Christ refers to is not related to the life here on earth, since it is obvious that all men "live" here, even non-Christians. Nor does He refer to "life" of the general resurrection. Rather, Christ refers to the glorious life which some Christians will inherit as a reward for righteous living. How necessary it is for us to partake in Christ's Body and Blood; by being with Him, our souls are washed and transformed – made beautiful – then, after death, we would not expect punishment and hell, but the unspeakable rewards of the Heavenly Kingdom.



4. Unity through love with other Christians.

Christ has only one Body, by partaking of It, each and everyone of us also becomes united into one body – the Body of Christ. Christ's love for us is made perfect in unity, since not only is it reciprocated between ourselves and Christ, but amongst ourselves as well. This is what Christ meant when He established the Church.

The Church is not a building where people pray, it is the Body of Christ – a living organism, in which we all unite in love with Him and amongst ourselves, when we partake of Holy Communion (1 Cor 10:17). Christ is the head of His Body, the Church (Col 1:18), and not some bishop, patriarch, theologian or other mortal man. The Orthodox Church is thus infallible, since Christ being God, is infallible; we can then be sure that our Divine nourishment can never be false or corrupted, even if those who perform this Sacrament are themselves imperfect or unworthy.