

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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

BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY JANUARY 10, 2016

SUN/JAN. 10

Sunday After Theophany

St. Theophan the Recluse

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

Children's Yolka Program

MON/JAN. 11

7:00p.m. Vespers

TUES/JAN. 12

St. Sava of Serbia

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

SAT./JAN.16

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

5:30p.m. Vigil; Confession

SUN/JAN. 17

33rd Sun. After Pentecost

St. Anthony the Great

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

Coffee Hour; Church School & Teen Class



THE BLESSING OF HOMES 2016

The blessing of homes will take place in the time period of January 7-31 and again from Feb. 21-Mar. 5. If you wish to have your home blessed, speak with Fr. James to arrange to schedule a time. Please check the Jan. & Feb. Monthly calendars on-line so your home blessing is not in competition with scheduled services and other parish events.

House Blessing: The Purpose

The blessing of homes is a custom of special beauty and significance. We ask Christ to bless and enter into our homes and our lives. We ask Him to be with us, as we desire to be with Him. We ask that by the sprinkling of blessed water, the Holy Spirit renew us, our families and our lives in our homes. As Christ brought salvation to the house of Zacchaeus; we ask for the same for all dwelling in our homes.

House Blessing: The Order

The house being cleaned and ready, we dress in an honorable manner (as we would for church). When the priest arrives, we greet him at the door, having turned off any radio, TV, or other noise based element. Animals that may cause disruption should be placed out of the way. On a small table before icons, a small but wide-mouthed bowl full of newly blessed water is placed. Together with a list of names of those who reside in the home, a lighted candle and censor (if you have one) are also placed on the table. These items are arranged prior to the arrival of the priest. At the beginning of the service for the blessing of the home, a family member leads the priest throughout the home, carrying the lighted candle. The rest of the household follows and then returns to the table for the final prayer and blessing with water upon those present.

Offerings Weeks of Jan. 10

Olive Oil: in memory of Michael, Justina, Anastasia and Rosalia; for a safe journey; for health of Basil.

Wine: for protection during travel of Mariana and Stefan.

The Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

Jan. 10, 1983 Helen Zvonchenko
Jan. 11, 1979 Vassily Koles
Jan. 12, 1965 Alex Emilianov
Jan. 12, 1976 Julia Dzyban
Jan. 12, 1982 Xenia Kalevich
Jan. 12, 2001 Margaret Lohsen
Jan. 12, 2013 Slako Yadlowsky
Jan. 13, 1953 Katherine Shwetz
Jan. 13, 1966 Peter Krentisky
Jan. 15, 2000 Ekaterina Moroshan

Coffee Hour Hosts

Jan. 03 Inga, Eka, Marina & Nona
Jan. 10 Motoviloff, Torrisi, Kachek & Stone
Jan. 17 Mantzafos, Sokol, Arpastean,
Nasledysheva, Staina & Sarchisian

Usher Schedule

Jan. 03 Timothy S. & Peter B.
Jan. 10 Jerome S. & Adrian M.
Jan. 17 Dennis F. & Peter B.

Counters

Jan. 03 Rebecca O. & Edward S.
Jan. 10 Lisa K. & Daniel T.
Jan. 17 Inga G. & Peter B.

Photos for Feasts of Nativity or our Lord and St. Basil Day

These photos are posted on the website as well as on Face Book.

A Variety of Incense For Home Use

Our religious goods counter has a new selection of incense check it out.

Diocese of NY-NJ Altar Servers Retreat

To be held at St. Basil's Academy in Garrison, NY. See posted materials on Bulletin Board or website Of diocese: www.nynjoca.com

The Calendar

Jan. 07-31 Blessing of Homes (First Period)
Feb. 21-06 Mar. Blessing Homes (Second Period)
Jan. 21 Thurs. Parish Council Meeting
Jan. 22 Fri. March For Life in DC
Jan. 23 Sat. Hall Kitchen Cleaning Day
Jan. 24 Sun. Question & Answer Period
Jan. 27 Wed. Monthly Study Class 7-8:30p.m.
Jan. 29-30 Blessing of New Church, Rocky Hill
Jan. 31 Sun. Deadline for Annual Mtg. Reports
Feb. 02 Tue. Meeting of the Lord Feast Day
Feb. 07 Sun. Scout Sunday
Feb. 07 Sun. Souper Bowl of Caring
Feb. 12-14 Diocese Altar Server Retreat
Feb. 24, 25 & 26 Pirogei Making Days
Feb. 29 Mon. Monthly Study Class 7-8:30p.m.
Feb. 28 Sun. Annual Parish Meeting 12:00p.m.
Mar. 06 Sun. End of Blessing of Homes Season
Mar. 06 Sun. Leave-Taking of Meats
Mar. 13 Sun. Leave-Taking of Meats
Mar. 14 Mon. Beginning of Great & Holy Lent
Mar. 27 Sun. Installation of Parish Council
Mar. 31 Thurs. Parish Council Meeting

Recipients of St. Basil Coins 2016

St. Basil the Great was pleased to bless Juliana Bakaletz (2nd time!) and Alexandru Chirnoaga.

Winter Weather Alert

If it is necessary to cancel or make a postponement to the parochial calendar, notification will be made at least 1 hour prior through face book, parish e-mail list and website. Please provide this information to anyone you know not having the above sources of information.

A Collection Table in Vestibule

Your old wall calendars and icon images from your Christmas cards may be deposited in the box provided. We should not dispose of these paper images in the trash.

3 Seeds of Growth – January

- 1) Have your home blessed.
- 2) Keep a bottle of holy water in your frig and use it frequently for spiritual needs, illness, temptation, school test, travelling etc.
- 3) Select a seed from Nov. or Dec. months that you have missed and work on it.

Reaching Out to the Non-Orthodox: *Deliberately Spreading the Orthodox Faith*

Does Reaching Out Make A Difference?

What importance do the local area non-Orthodox place on parish outreach to the neighboring and surrounding community?

By various estimates and surveys, **up to 80%** of the local area non-Orthodox population would consider attending the local Orthodox Church ****if**** they had some sort of connection to the parish via parish-sponsored ministries that were of direct value and positive influence and provided some benefit to the family.

The old adage is therefore very true: ***“People don’t care what you know until they know that you care.”***

In the last edition of *Beyond the Plateau* we discussed how parishes can reach non-Orthodox through creative, inviting and welcoming parish events that **attract** the wider, non-Orthodox community to the parish.

While an outreach strategy based on events that **attract** is desirable, the opportunity dynamic to bring in and incorporate the non-Orthodox still lies with the outsider, the non-Orthodox to whom the Faith is presented as an opportunity to accept or reject.

This means the strategy of “attracting” is still only one leg of a three-legged strategy to bring new people into parish life. The second leg is that of deliberate **outreach**, reaching out to the community

Reaching Out

Rather than bringing in, here you are deliberately leaving the parish, figuratively or otherwise, to reach out to those clearly identified as non-parishioners. Regardless of what this “clearly identified” group is, the fact is that you will tend to grow among those people with whom you share commonalities. A crowd attracts a crowd, and like attracts like.

If you are a suburban parish with young families with kids, you will tend to more easily attract young families with children. Thus, when you have events (dances, speakers, choir concerts, musical entertainment, icon workshops) you are, deliberately or otherwise, planning and structuring

those events to reach people in the community who would find the parish’s social and spiritual life to be of value and interest to them.

But how do you deal with those people who may not have any sort of direct connection or even interest in an Orthodox parish, or who may have a need that the parish can directly address? Such externally directed efforts may actually cost the parish and not offer any significant “return on investment”. Examples: AA meetings, Scouting programs, after-school mentoring, and Father-Daughter dances (a favorite of mine!). In addition to this there are the social welfare ministries such as soup kitchens and food pantries, whether the parish sponsors its own or helps

out elsewhere. Deliberately planning to reach people for an event – any event – or ongoing program needs months (not weeks) of planning, advertising, and appropriate and adequate PR, not to mention insurance issues (if the ministry or work being done is to take place on-premises).

The Parish Open House

How do we know what kind of external (to the parish) neighborhood ministries would be welcomed by the wider community? *Ask them!*

The idea of surveying the neighborhood can be done in a variety of ways. First, flyers can be sent out by your local post office (ask them for details) to all homes in a particular zip code(s). Via this flyer, the parish can invite the wider neighborhood to a Parish-Community Open House. Local politicians and police love attending these kinds of meetings in order to assist parishes in their desire to reach out to the wider community, and can also act as an attendance draw. Internet tools like Eventbrite and Survey Monkey can be used to administer the event and help direct those interested in attending to sign-up, thus helping the parish manage expectations and logistics.

The agenda is simple:

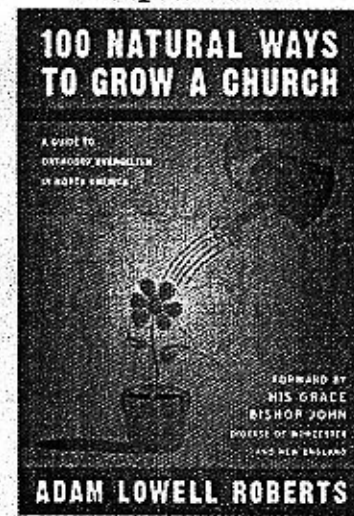
- Welcome the attendees.
- Talk (briefly!) about the parish and the desire of the parish to serve the community.
- Present the attendees with a list of suggested ministries, such as the aforementioned Scouting programs, AA and the like; then present, realistically, any obvious pros and cons that should be known upfront.
- Spend the bulk of time letting the attendees make their own suggestions and simply see where the Spirit leads from there.

Since most neighborhoods see the local Orthodox church as a “foreign” entity, sponsoring community-based programs is a way for non-attending neighbors to view the parish as the place where they have a connection: their children go to Scouting programs there, for example, no longer making the parish “foreign” but rather the place where the family finds help and assistance in many forms.

For Discussion:

1. *How has your parish deliberately planned to reach people not currently a part of the parish?*
2. *What particular ministry interests do your parishioners have that could be fulfilled in neighborhood service?*
3. *What needs can be discerned in the surrounding community that the parish can address?*

Helpful Tool!



Available on Amazon, this book is filled with great ideas for both inreach and outreach, and contains info on implementation time, cost and number of volunteers needed as well as numerous parish case studies.



TROPARION TO
ST. THEOPHAN THE RECLUSE

Tone 8
INSTRUCTOR OF ORTHODOXY,
TEACHER OF PIETY AND PURITY,* ASCETIC
OF VYSHA, DIVINELY WISE HIERARCH THEOPHAN,*
IN THY WRITINGS THOU HAST EXPOUNDED
THE WORD OF GOD* INDICATING TO ALL THE
FAITHFUL THE WAY TO SALVATION.*
BESEECH CHRIST GOD THAT OUR
SOULS MAY BE SAVED.



KONTAKION

Tone 4
AS THE NAMESAKE OF THE APPEARING
OF GOD,* O HIERARCH THEOPHAN,* WITH THY
TEACHINGS THOU HAST ILLUMINED MANY PEOPLE.*
NOW STANDING WITH THE ANGELS BEFORE THE
THRONE OF THE HOLY TRINITY,* PRAY
WITHOUT CEASING FOR US ALL.

St Theophan the Recluse was born on January 10, 1815, in the heart of Russia. His father was a Priest and thus, from the first impressions of his youth, he lived with the Church. The difficult and even severe conditions of the Orel Seminary, where he studied, developed in him a strong mental temper. He continued his education in the Kiev Theological Academy. One may surmise that during this time the young student often went to the justly renowned Kiev Caves Monastery, where there could have been formed in him the resolution to leave the world. Even before finishing the seminary course, he was tonsured a monk. On this occasion, he went to the monastery to the well-known Elder, Hieromonk Partheny, who told him, "Remember that one thing is most necessary of all, to pray and to pray unceasingly in your mind and heart to God". This counsel made a lasting impression on the newly tonsured monk and he spent the rest of his life striving to attain this "one thing needful".

Having finished the course with a Master's Degree, Hieromonk Theophan was assigned as temporary rector of the Kiev-Sofia Theological School. In the years that followed, he held various administrative and teaching positions in different seminaries and academies, but such scholarly work did not satisfy him and he petitioned to be discharged from academic service.

In 1859, he was consecrated Bishop for Tambov, where he established a Diocesan school for girls. During his stay in the Tambov, St Theophan came to love the isolated Vysha Hermitage. In the summer of 1863, he was transferred to Vladimir, where he served for three years. Here too, he opened a Diocesan school for girls. He often served in church, travelled much throughout the Diocese, preached constantly, restored churches, and wholeheartedly lived with his flock, sharing with them both joy and sorrow.

In 1866, Bishop Theophan petitioned to be relieved as Bishop of Vladimir and was appointed head of the Vysha Hermitage, and soon, at a new petition of his, he was freed even from this duty. It was difficult for Bishop Theophan in the midst of the world and those demands to which one must yield because of human corruption. This was one reason that induced him to leave his Diocese and retire into solitude. In addition, his unlimited goodness of heart, meekness as a dove's, his trust of people and indulgence of them—all this indicated that it was not for him to live amidst the irreconcilable quarrels of vain worldly life. It was very difficult for him to be a leader, especially in such an important position as that of Bishop. His trust could be abused; he could never give necessary reprimands. Besides this, he felt the call to devote all his energies to spiritual writing. As for himself personally, he wished to give up all his thoughts to God alone, Whom he loved absolutely. He desired that nothing might disturb the complete communion with God that was so dear to him, and so he left the world to be alone with God.

In reclusion, invisible to people, he became a public figure of enormous magnitude. He sought only the Kingdom of God, and his great significance for the world was added to him. The first six years the Bishop went to all services and to the early Liturgy. In church, he stood without moving, without leaning, with eyes closed to stop being distracted, and on feast days, he usually officiated.

Beginning in 1872 AD, however, he discontinued all intercourse with people except for the chief priest and his confessor. He went no longer to the monastery church, but built with his own hands in his chambers a small church dedicated to the Baptism of the Lord. For the first ten years, he served the Liturgy in this church every Sunday and feast day, and for the next eleven years everyday. He served completely alone, sometimes in silence, but sometimes singing.

He seemed to be no longer a man, but an angel with a childlike meekness and gentleness. When people came to him on business, he said what was necessary and returned to prayer. He ate only enough so as not to ruin his health. Everything that he received he sent by mail to the poor, leaving himself only enough to buy necessary books. From his publications, which were quickly distributed, he received nothing, hoping only that they might be sold as cheaply as possible.

In the rare moments when he was free from prayer, reading, or writing, he occupied himself with manual labour. He painted excellent icons and was skilled in woodcarving and the locksmith's trade. Every day Bishop Theophan received between 20 and 40 letters, and he answered them all. With extraordinary sensitivity he penetrated to the spiritual situation of the writer and warmly, clearly, and in detail replied to this confession of a distressed soul. In addition to this enormous flow of correspondence, the years of reclusion also produced a wealth of books. These include works on moral theology, such as "The Path to Salvation", "What the Spiritual Life is and How to Attune Oneself to it", commentaries on Holy Scripture, and translations, among which is to be found the spiritual classic "Unseen Warfare".

The life of Bishop Theophan passed unseen by the world, and death too came to him in solitude. Beginning January 1, 1891, there were several irregularities in his schedule. On the afternoon of January 6, his cell-attendant noticed that the Bishop was weak and looking into his room, he found the Bishop lying on the bed lifeless. His left arm rested on his breast and his right arm was folded as if for a Bishop's blessing. He had died on the very day of his most beloved Feast, to which his chapel was dedicated. The Saint's body remained in the small church in his cell for three days, and for three days it was in the Cathedral—and there was no corruption. When he was clothed in his Bishop's vestments, the face of the dead man was brightened by a joyful smile.

Everything was extremely simple in Bishop Theophan's cell. The walls were bare, the furniture old. There was a trunk with instruments for lathe-work, carpentry, bookbinding; photographic equipment, a bench for sawing, a joiner's bench, and numerous books written in Russian, Slavonic, Greek, French, German, and English. Among them were: a complete collection of the Holy Fathers; a theological encyclopaedia in French in 150 volumes, the works of the philosophers Hegel, Fichte, Jacobi, and others; works on natural history by Humboldt, Darwin, Fichte, and others. One calls to mind his words, "It is good to understand the structure of plants, of animals, especially of man, and the laws of life; in them is revealed the wisdom of God, which is great in everything".

The great Hierarch is hidden from us in body, but his spirit lives in the divinely wise printed works that he left. Archbishop Nicander of Vilna described Bishop Theophan as a universal Christian teacher, even though he did not speak; a public figure, though in reclusion; a preacher of the Church who was heard everywhere, even though in his last years he appeared in no Church Sec. A bright lamp of Christ's teaching for Orthodox people, even though he concealed himself from the people's gaze; possessing scarcely a sufficiency of earthly goods, yet enriching all with the spiritual wealth of his teaching. He sought after no temporal, earthly glory, yet glorified now by all those who have been inspired by his writings to follow this holy recluse on the path to salvation, a path that leads to constant prayer and the state of being alone in one's heart with God.

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Prayer is the elevation of the mind and heart to God in praise, in thanksgiving and in petition for the spiritual and material good we need. The Saviour commanded us to enter into our inner room and there to pray to God the Father in secret. According to Saint Demetrius of Rostov, the inner room means the heart. Consequently, the commandment of the Lord obliges us to pray mentally in our heart to God. This commandment extends to all Christians. The Apostle Paul commands the same, saying that we must pray in spirit always. Therefore it is impossible to contest the fact that mental prayer is compulsory for all Christians, and if it is obligatory it is also possible—God does not command the impossible.