

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

605 Washington Avenue, Manville, New Jersey 08835-1856

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

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

Diocese of NY-NJ: www.ocanyuj.org

BULLETIN AUGUST 21, 2016

SUNDAY/AUGUST 21

9th Sunday After Pentecost

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Prayers For Academic Year;
Coffee Hour; Q. & A. Period

SATURDAY/AUGUST 27

9:30a.m. Akathist to our Lord; Confessions
5:30p.m. Vigil; Confessions

SUNDAY/AUGUST 28

10th Sunday After Pentecost St. Moses the Black

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour
12:00p.m. Special Parish Meeting in Regard
to the Parish Center Roof
6:30p.m. Vespers

MONDAY/AUGUST 29

Beheading of St. John the Baptist (Fast Day: no meat, dairy or fish)

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

THURSDAY/SEPTEMBER 1

Church New Year

7:00p.m. Molieben for Church New Year
and Ice Cream Party

SATURDAY/SEPTEMBER 3

St. Edward, King of England Relics of St. Nectarios of Aegina

9:30a.m. Akathist to St. Nectarios; Confessions
5:30p.m. Vigil; Confessions

HOLY COMMUNION

Partaking of Holy Communion is man's greatest privilege on earth, because it gives man that which nothing else can offer him: Communion with God and psychosomatic preparation of his being for eternal life. For this reason, abstinence from Holy Communion is the greatest calamity that a Christian can experience.

Also, those who abstain from receiving Holy Communion, without having committed a grave sin which needs special counseling from the spiritual father, deprive themselves of God's grace and power and by themselves cut themselves off or temporarily excommunicate themselves from the Body of Christ.

The Christian should not be hesitant to receive or postpone receiving Holy Communion as a matter of habit once or twice a year. The Christian does not take Holy Communion because he is sinless. He takes Holy Communion because he is sinful and sick and needs God's help to release him from his passions and help him progress in his life in Christ. Fasting and confession are not directly related to taking Holy Communion. Each one has its own place in spiritual life. It is not necessary that one experience all three spiritual activities together.

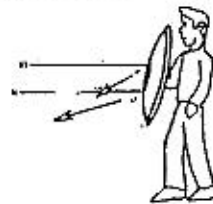


Nourishment
Heavenly

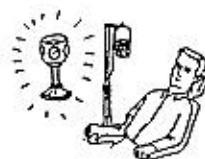
Holy Communion



Immortal Medicine
(against spiritual death)



Armor
(against the devil)



Blood transfusion
(which enlivens man's
body and soul)



Divine Insurance
(protection for everyday
life)



Divine fire
(burns up whatever
harms man's body and
soul)

Offerings Week of August 21

Olive Oil: in memory of Michael, Justina, Michael, and Rosalie; for the health and protection of Nicholas; in memory of Sarchisian and Bocai families.

Flowers: on first wedding anniversary of Stephen & Svetlana

Wine: in thanksgiving on wedding anniversary; for the health of Natalie.

The Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

Aug. 21, 1980 Mary Pegene
Aug. 21, 2001 Anna Cherniak
Aug. 22, 1978 Anna Recketz
Aug. 23, 1926 John Mlinets
Aug. 23, 1938 Semeon Dutko
Aug. 24, 1954 John Wasevich
Aug. 24, 1958 John Galida
Aug. 24, 1990 Michael Sudia
Aug. 25, 1977 Tekla Barna
Aug. 26, 1962 Anna Persurance
Aug. 26, 1965 John Harchin
Aug. 26, 2001 John Wassel
Aug. 27, 1934 John Poklitar
Aug. 27, 1970 Luke Vozny

Coffee Hour Schedule

Parishioners are welcome to bring food anytime they wish, but be mindful of fasting days.

Aug. 21 Wypych, Chirnoaga, Moldoveanu, Vajda & Sue
Aug. 28 Peterson, Bakaletz, Mattei, Erkman & Stone
Sept. 04 Kita, Keller, Turri, Torrisi & Kachek

Usher Schedule

Aug. 21 Dennis F.
Aug. 28 Edward S. & Kahka K.
Sept. 04 Timothy S. & Peter B.

Counter

Aug. 21 Ekaterina M. & Irina Staina
Aug. 28 Jill Peterson & Paulina N.
Sept. 04 Rebecca O. & Lisa K.

Sunday Readers Schedule

Aug. 21 Ciprian C.
Aug. 28 Daniel T.
Sept. 04 John Z.

If the Child needs to be on time for school, the Child needs to be on time for church

There is a pervasive bad habit of parents bringing their child or children late to church. By school age (and even before school age), children ought to be in church before the bell rings (9:30a.m.). Discipline, a sense of the holiness of time and place, as well as fervent participation are all factors on being on time. Oftentimes lateness to the Sunday Divine Liturgy means that the Epistle, Gospel and Sermon are missed and instruction and inspiration are lost both for the adult parent and child/children. Lateness to church is a sin.

On Receiving the Body and Blood of Christ

- If you are a regular communicant and have not been to Confession any time after Holy Pascha (May 1) to continue to receive the Holy Gifts (Communion) **you must go to Confession no later than Aug. 31st**. This discipline is for both adults and children of Confession age.

The Church School and Youth Group

Parents have received the 2016-2017 calendar for the year. Please incorporate it into your family agenda. September 11 & 25th are church school sessions and the Youth Outing for Ball Game is Sunday, September 11th. Please speak with Rebecca Oliver for more information.

Parish Center Hall Roof Donations Received To Date

1) \$5,000.00 2) \$1,000.00 3) \$200.00
4) \$500.00 5) \$500.00 6) \$1,000.00
7) \$200.00 8) \$2,000.00 9) \$100.00
10) \$2,000.00 11) \$1,000.00 12) \$1,000.00
13) \$500.00 = Total of \$15,000.00

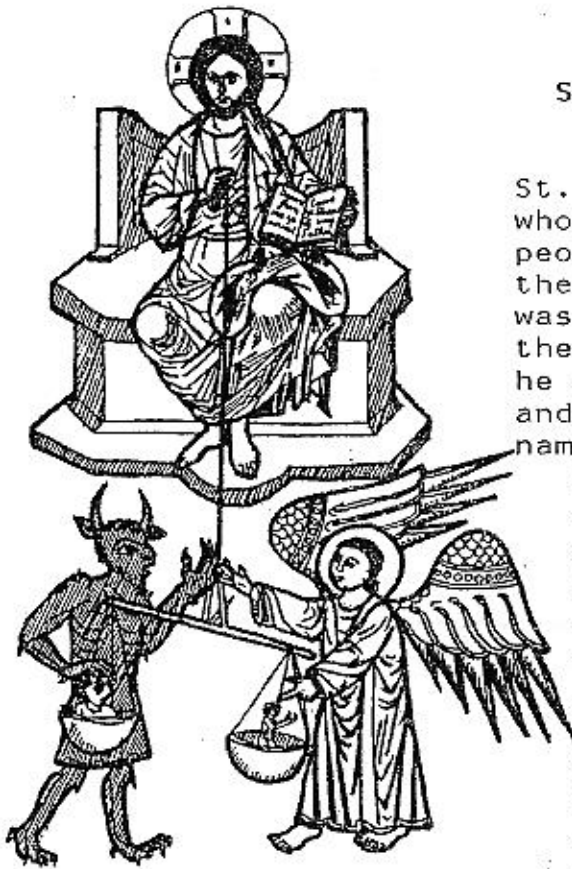
Fall Adult Study Classes

5 Classes, Thursdays, Sept. 22, 29, Oct. 6, 13 & 20. November 16th Class and December 8th Class. Time: 7-8:30p.m. All are invited. Topics are to be announced. Please make suggestions to Fr. James.

Namesday Greetings

Prophet Samuel/Aug. 20: Samuel Davis and Samuel Alexander Davis. Many Blessed Years!

ST. ARSENIOS BOKA (+1989) AND HIS REVELATION



St. Arsenios was a renowned Romanian monastic who was a confessor and spiritual guide to many people. He was a member of the brotherhood of the St. Constantine Binkoveanou Monastery. He was gifted with the grace to enter and examine the depths of a person's soul. For their benefit, he would reveal their thoughts and many past sins and deeds. The saint would also know a person's name upon meeting them and without any prior knowledge.

The righteous elder foretold his repose and the fall of atheistic communism in Romania. He reposed in November of 1989 and yet has remained in the souls of many of his spiritual children, continuing to guide them from above.

At his grave site at the Prislop Monastery, a miraculous event occurs that attracts many. Flowers grow on his grave and remain in full blossom, not being subject to the bitter freeze.

The following is a revelation of St. Arsenios offered for our edification.

He was extremely bothered and concerned about the many people he confessed who refused to change their life, selecting to continue satisfying their desires. St. Arsenios was fully aware that, in the Day of Judgment, he would be their guarantor for the salvation of their souls. He thus begged and pleaded with God to reveal to him the reason for which people refuse to abandon their sinful ways.

One day, while he was sitting in a chair within his garden staring at the mountain across from him, he observed that a huge dark cloud appeared on the mountaintop. There was great commotion and noise coming from within the cloud. Continuing to attentively stare at it, he suddenly observed that the cloud separated in two and at the very peak of the mountain there was a royal throne surrounded by fire. On the throne was seated the Enemy of mankind, Satan, surrounded by a plethora of demons. St. Arsenios was able to clearly follow what was transpiring. He thus hears the Evil One say:

“Which one of you is skillful and clever enough to come up with some kind of a cunning and wicked thought which we will whisper in the minds of people so that we can attract them and draw them to our side? In this way we can establish a kingdom that is greater than God's since there is so little time left...”

A demon then appeared who worshipped his leader all the way to the ground and said:

“Excellent leader of the darkness, I consider it proper to whisper into people’s ears that there is no God.”

Satan then said:

“Your wickedness is not the best because we can gain a greater number of souls in a different way. Let somebody else come up with another idea.”

A second one came and said:

“Excellent leader of the darkness, I suggest that we whisper to them that there is a God but there is no such thing as Heaven or Hell and that this life of theirs simply ends at their grave.”

Satan, after extensive contemplation, said:

“This wicked thought is also insufficient and will not enable us to win many souls. People will remember that Christ said, as He ascended into Heaven: ‘In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. [Jn 14:2-3]’ The faith of people into these words is unfortunately strong enough to counteract our plans. People will continue to believe that He will reward all according to their life deeds. Let another one of you suggest something else.”

A third one then came up and after he worshipped his leader all the way to the ground, took the floor and said:

“Most excellent leader of the darkness, I propose that it is much better that we praise people for their faith in God, their belief in the existence of Paradise and Hell, their expectation for the Last Judgment. However and at the same time, let us whisper to them: ‘Do not rush into repentance. Let repentance be your deed during the latter part of your life. Death is still far away. For the time being, enjoy your life, satisfy all of your carnal desires because you have plenty of time left.’ Thus, while we conduct our alluring and magic works, they will grow old without realizing it and reach their life’s end before they can repent. Death will arrive suddenly and will find them unprepared and they will be ours forever.”

Satan then moved his head acknowledging his satisfaction. He grunted and squealed with devilish joy and with hasty anxiety told them all: “Quickly, all of you go and do exactly as your colleague indicated.”

It is for this reason that people fulfill their Christian duties in a lackluster manner. The cunning demons, throughout their life, whisper to them in a tempting way regarding the joys of this world and people obey. They refuse to change their ways and continue to satisfy their desires and sinful nature, ignoring the advice of the Church regarding true repentance, even in their old age...

Commitment, Community, and Motivating Members

In the last edition of *Beyond the Plateau* we looked at parish membership and involvement as a series of concentric rings, noting the desirability of moving people from the outer, less committed and involved rings to the inner, more involved and committed core. We need to now turn our attention to exactly how this can be done.

Imagine this: the new parish strategic planning session is completed. The attendees have been impressed and motivated by the material presented and are ready to go out and begin the new work of outreach and ministry necessary to move beyond the plateau, or reverse the decline, which they observe that the parish is facing. With boundless enthusiasm they begin to approach their fellow parishioners, especially those who weren't in attendance at the planning session, looking for and asking for a commitment to the new work that lies ahead. Unfortunately, the familiar biblical story begins to unfold right before their eyes: "*And one by one, they all began to excuse themselves, saying...*" They are surprised and even hurt that their fellow parishioners are not able or willing to commit themselves to the exciting and challenging work that lies ahead. Frustrated, they may question whether it is even worth it to undertake the new outreach effort without the entire parish being committed to it. "What's wrong with them?" they ask.

Perhaps nothing is wrong. Perhaps there are more helpful motivators than mere commitment. People who are involved in parish life are involved at different levels and respond to different forms of encouragement and motivation.

Some will wonder, "What's so wrong with asking for commitment?" Isn't that the key ingredient to a healthy and growing parish? If we're committed to Christ, doesn't that mean we have to be committed to His Church, to our local parish community? After all, isn't commitment what's needed in our parishes, and lots more of it to boot? Isn't the lack of commitment what's hurting parish life because not enough people have it? Don't the challenges we face demand it?

People have many different motivating factors for getting "involved" in church work and ministry. These different motivating factors appeal to people in different ways, appeal to basic instincts as well as to deeply held and deeply felt beliefs and values. I find it helpful to consider the four categories of motivation described in the box on the right: **compassion, community, challenge and commitment.**

In dying and declining parishes, and those struggling with issues of growth and health, the leaders (clergy and laity alike) and members who form the **Core**, along with some in the **Committee**, are most often those who are *committed* to the *challenge* of keeping the flame of hope alive.

However, others among the **Committed** as well as many in the **Congregation** are dissatisfied with these constant appeals to commitment and challenge. They're unhappy with parish life because they originally joined the parish for other reasons: those of *compassion* and *community*. The parish was full of people who cared about each other, not just about a building;

4 Motivational Resources:

- 1. Commitment**
Characteristics: dedication, loyalty, duty, obligation, vows
Appeals to: the Core, some of the Committed
- 2. Challenge**
Characteristics: achievement, accomplishment, goals, objectives
Appeals to: the Core, some of the Committed
- 3. Compassion**
Characteristics: sharing, caring, loving, giving, serving, supporting
Appeals to: Some of the Committed, the Congregation
- 4. Community**
Characteristics: good fun, good times, fellowship, affiliation, belonging, family, home
Appeals to: Some of the Committed, the Congregation

about the salvation of the world and the well-being of the society around them, not only about budgets, assessments and the color of the new carpet; it was about potluck dinners, dances and other avenues for social interaction where you could meet and greet your friends and neighbors, your brothers and sisters in the Lord, even your future spouse. Even if the ethnic aspects of parish life seemed more prevalent than theological teaching and learning, still, they contributed heavily to the experience of *community*.

Similarly, the lapsed, the unchurched and the dechurched (not to mention the growing number of actual pagans within North American society) are not going to respond to a gospel message that asks them for commitment before it asks them to encounter the message of and the reality of the Risen Lord in and through the local worshipping community. They need to know **Who** God is before they can respond to the calls to honor and obey Him. And they will meet God incarnated within the community of the local parish through the compassion it sincerely displays to outsiders and newcomers.

Commitment is something that grows over time. It is something that develops over ten, fifteen and twenty years, as one lives in, grows in, and matures in the Christian life. It is also seen and expressed by some as a form of discipline, much like some would approach, say, fasting. Commitment is therefore not an effective motivator with new and especially unchurched people, those who have come to church looking for compassion and community.

What Does Scripture Say?

We should note what the Scriptures say as well as what they do not say:

The Scriptures do not say "We are committed to God because God was first committed to us" **but rather** "We love Him because He first loved us."

The Scriptures do not say "For God was so committed to the world..." **but rather** "For God so loved the world..."

It was not said of the early Christians: "Look how they are committed to one another" **but rather** "Look how they love one another."

Has any man ever convinced a woman to marry him by challenging her to do it, or by demanding a commitment after the first date? Commitment only comes after she learns how much he cares about her – how much he loves her and wants to spend time building a family with her! The same is true for parishes, but the lesson seems harder for us to learn in that context. Often, we are inclined to value committees more than compassion, challenges more than community. Committees don't grow churches, and challenges based on human endeavor alone can lead to frustration.

Unfortunately, as churches start to decline, the motivational factors of compassion and community are replaced by those of commitment and challenge. Church leaders, and everyone affiliated with the parish, must always understand that motivation is something that is internal, not external. Motivation itself is something that people draw upon from within themselves (as noted also by its synonyms, inspiration and enthusiasm). The old adage here is extremely applicable: "People don't care what you know until they know you care." Jesus always reached out to people's felt needs as He presented the Gospel to them. He showed them that He cared for them, loved them, and was ready, willing and able to minister to them, even as He was revealing to them the

Mysteries of the Kingdom.

If we are to truly involve our people in helpful, healthy and fruitful ministry, we must come to understand that there are many ways to motivate people to do the Lord's work. People will willingly give of their time, talent and resources to grow their church. Finding the right motivating factor can make all the difference.

Questions:

1. What factors mentioned here do our members respond to most enthusiastically?
2. How do we spend parish time and resources identifying and training members for ministry?
3. How well do we recognize and thank our members for the good work they do?

Fr. Jonathan Ivanoff is rector of St. John the Theologian Church in Shirley, New York and the director of the diocesan Commission on Mission and Evangelism. He can be reached at frjonathan@hotmail.com.