

## SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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

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### *BULLETIN SEPTEMBER 11, 2016*

#### **SUNDAY/SEPTEMBER 11**

##### **Sunday Before the Holy Cross**

##### **St. Silouan of Mt. Athos**

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

Coffee Hour & Church School

12:00p.m. Youth Outing Ball Park

#### **TUESDAY/SEPTEMBER 13**

7:00p.m. Vigil for the Holy Cross

#### **WEDNESDAY/SEPTEMBER 14**

##### **Elevation of the Holy Cross**

##### ***Strict Fast Day***

(One of "the 12 Great Feasts" of the Year)

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

7:00p.m. Compline

#### **THURSDAY/SEPTEMBER 15**

7:00p.m. Parish Council Meeting

#### **SATURDAY/SEPTEMBER 17**

##### **Ss. Sophie, Hope, Love & Faith**

9:30a.m. Akathist to the Holy Cross;

Confessions

#### **SUNDAY/SEPTEMBER 18**

##### **Sunday After the Holy Cross**

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

Coffee Hour



Icon of the Elevation of the Cross.

### **Offerings Week of September 11**

Olive Oil: in memory of Michael, Justina, Michael, and Rosalie; for the health and protection of Vera and in memory of John; in memory of Floarea, Gheorghe, Gabriela, Elena, Petre, Alexandru, Maria, Grigore, Aurelia, Ilie and Valeria; for the health of Jason (birthday).

Litya Breads: for the health of Katherine.

### **The Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!**

Sept. 12, 1929 Helen Kotliarchik  
Sept. 12, 1971 Pauline Kravitsky  
Sept. 12, 1974 Anna Naruta  
Sept. 12, 1995 Anna Rudzina  
Sept. 14, 1978 Stephen Keselchak  
Sept. 15, 1966 Theodore Mivonuk  
Sept. 16, 1980 Mary Lukasik  
Sept. 17, 1960 Katherine Sedorkewicz  
Sept. 17, 1988 Raymond Koslosky  
Sept. 17, 2003 Mila Seidal

### **Coffee Hour Schedule**

- Parishioners are invited to bring any foods they wish on any given Sunday.
- Coffee Hour Hosts are reminded to prepare foods that do not require your absence during the Liturgy. Foods should be simple enough that you leave the church only after the time of Communion.
- Coffee Hour Hosts, please place trash in the garbage cans outside, or if the cans are full, on top of the cans, but not on the ground.

Sept. 11 Inga, Eka, Marina & Nona  
Sept. 18 Sokol, Arpastean, Nasedysheva, Staina & Sarchisian  
Sept. 25 Wypych, Chirnoaga, Moldoveanu, Vajda and Sue

### **Usher Schedule**

Sept. 11 Jerome S. & Adrian M.  
Sept. 18 Dennis F.  
Sept. 25 Edward S. & Kahka K.

### **Counters**

Sept. 11 Ciprian C. & Larissa M.  
Sept. 18 Ekaterina M.  
Sept. 25 Jill P. & Paulina N.

### **Sunday Readers Schedule**

Sept. 11 Austin K. Sept. 18 Ciprian C.  
Sept. 25 Daniel T.

### **Names Day Greetings – Many Years!**

St. Cornelius/Sept. 15: Ciprian Corneliu Chirnoaga  
St. Sophie/Sept. 17: Sophie Barana, Sophia Bakaletz and Vasilisa Sophie Avelar.

### **Fall Adult Study Classes**

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

### **Parish Center Hall Roof Donations**

#### **Received to Date – September 10**

1) \$5,000.00	18) \$35.00
2) \$1,000.00	19) \$300.00
3) \$200.00	20) \$250.00
4) \$500.00	21) \$3,000.00
5) \$500.00	22) \$500.00
6) \$1,000.00	23) \$500.00
7) \$300.00	24) \$1,000.00
8) \$2,000.00	25) \$200.00
9) \$1,000.00	26) \$100.00
10) \$3,000.00	27) \$3,000.00
11) \$500.00	28) \$1,000.00
12) \$100.00	29) \$1,000.00
13) \$100.00	30) \$300.00
14) \$1,000.00	31) \$300.00
15) \$500.00	
16) \$1,500.00	31 of 65 parish households
17) \$500.00	have contributed (48%)

#### **Donations for Hall Roof from Friends of The Parish (non-parishioners)**

1) \$100.00	10) \$10.00
2) \$2,000.00	11) \$100.00
3) \$100.00	12) \$400.00
4) \$30.00	13) \$100.00
5) \$50.00	14) \$5,000.00
6) \$100.00	
7) \$500.00	
8) \$60.00	
9) \$2,000.00	

**Parish Hall Roof Costs: \$50,000.00**  
**Donations to Date: \$40,895.00**

### BROKEN TO BE MORE BEAUTIFUL

From "Surviving the Loss of a Loved One" by Fr. Anthony Coniaris

Many years ago the architect planned that the walls of the Royal Palace be covered with sheets of beautiful mirrors from Paris. But when the shipment of glass arrived from Paris every mirror had been smashed in travel. The entire shipment was destroyed! The entrance could not be completed. Just as the workmen started gathering the broken pieces together to discard them the architect said, "Wait a minute. I've got an idea!" He then took them up in his hands and walked over to the entry. The skilled architect then put some glue on the wall and arranged the tiny pieces. He did this several times until he had an enormous distortion in reflections, sparkling with a rainbow of brilliant colors! At no point were they broken alike and at no point was the angle exact. Today, the Royal Palace is a dazzling brilliant display of prisms, reflecting light! As I read this story I could only think of one line, "Broken to be more beautiful!"



God takes the broken things in our lives, as the architect took the broken pieces of those mirrors and makes them over into the better things of his divine purpose. God can do wonders with a broken heart and a broken life if we will give Him the pieces. But this is exactly what most of us refuse to do; take the pieces to Him! I love the proverb which says, "God can draw straight even with crooked lines."

He can use your grief to help build a better you, if you will bring the pieces to Him.



### THE BLOOD OF CHRIST AND THE SKULL OF ADAM

The mount of Calvary or Golgotha means in Hebrew the "place of the Skull." Some biblical scholars have erroneously attested that it was called this name because the rock formations there resembled a skull. Yet, the actual reason for the name comes from an ancient Jewish tradition that the skull of Adam was brought on the Ark by Noah, and then buried under Calvary.

At the moment of Christ's death, the earth quaked and the rock was split in two, thus allowing the atoning Blood of Christ to literally flow over the bones of Adam. This is why in Orthodox iconographical depictions of the Crucifixion, we see a skull and crossbones at the base of the Cross.

### ABOUT THE THREE-BARRED CROSS

The Three-barred Cross is common to most Slavic Orthodox lands. The three bars distinguish the Holy Cross as the Cross of Christ, as opposed to other crosses used by the Romans. The smaller upper bar represents the sign placed above the Lord's head, which read, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews". The slanted lower bar reflects the fate of the thieves crucified on either side of the Lord: one side pointing up to Paradise, the other downward to Hades.

On either side of the Cross are often pictures the spear used to pierce the Lord's side, and the pole with the sponge used to give Him sour wine to drink.



Before Thy Cross



### PRAYER BEFORE READING THE SCRIPTURES

Illumine our hears, O Master who lovest mankind, with the pure light of Thy divine knowledge. Open the eyes of our mind to the understanding of Thy gospel teachings. Implant also in us the fear of Thy blessed commandments, that trampling down all carnal desires, we may enter upon a spiritual manner of living, both thinking and doing such things as are well-pleasing unto Thee. For Thou art the illumination of our souls and bodies, O Christ our God, and unto Thee we ascribe glory, together with Thy Father, who is from everlasting, and Thine all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever unto ages of ages. Amen.

### PRAYER BEFORE STARTING ANY WORK

O Lord Jesus Christ, Only-Begotten Son of Thy Eternal Father, Thou hast said with Thy most holy lips: "Without Me, you can do nothing." My Lord and my God, in faith I embrace Thy words with my heart and soul, and bow down before Thy goodness, help me, a sinner, to do in union with Thee this work which I am about to begin, in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### PRAYER AFTER COMPLETING ANY WORK

Thou, O my Christ, art the sum and fullness of all that is good; fill my soul with joy and gladness, and save me, for Thou alone art all-merciful. Amen.

### WHEN YOUR HUT'S ON FIRE

The only survivor of a shipwreck was washed up on a small, uninhabited island. He prayed feverishly for God to rescue him. Everyday he scanned the horizon for help, but none seemed forthcoming. Exhausted, he eventually managed to build a little hut out of driftwood to protect him from the elements, and to store his few possessions.



One day, after scavenging for food, he arrived home to find his little hut in flames, with smoke rolling up to the sky. He felt the worst had happened, and everything was lost. He was stunned with disbelief, grief, and anger. He cried out, "God! How could you do this to me?"

Early the next day, he was awakened by the sound of a ship approaching the island! It had come to rescue him! "How did you know I was here?," asked the weary man of his rescuers. "We saw your smoke signal," they replied.

**The Moral of This Story:** *It's easy to get discouraged when things are going bad, but we shouldn't lose heart, because God is at work in our lives... even in the midst of our pain and suffering. Remember that the next time your little hut seems to be burning to the ground. It just may be a smoke signal that summons the Grace of God.*



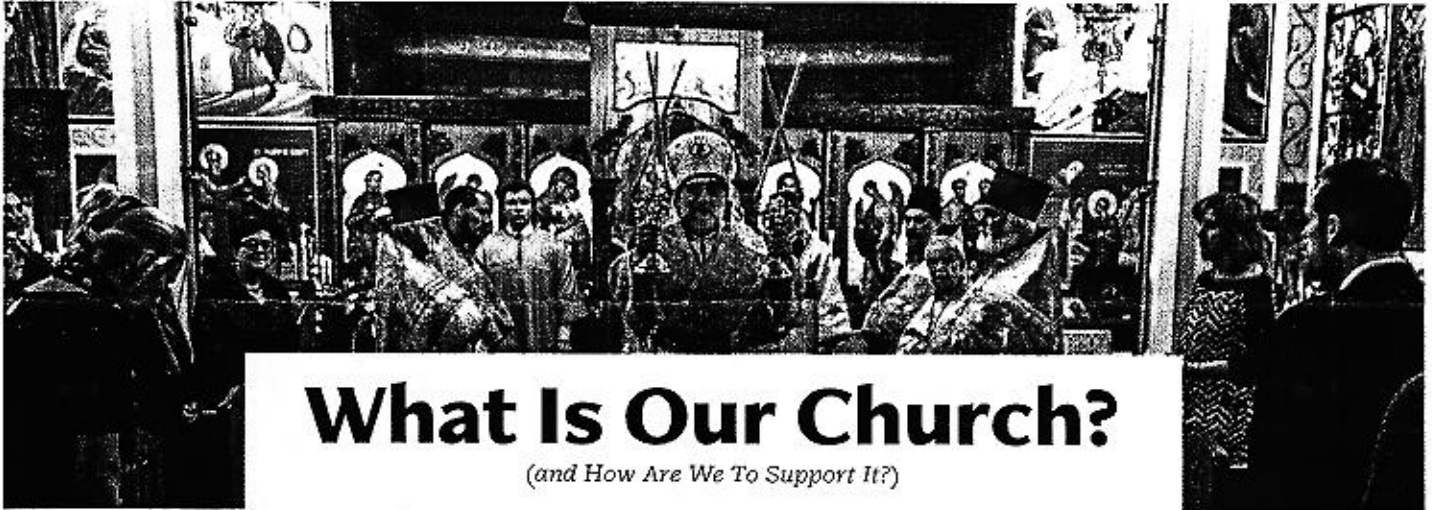
### THE EXALTATION OF THE PRECIOUS CROSS

*Celebrated on September 14<sup>th</sup>*

Saint Helen, the mother of Saint Constantine the Great, when she was already advanced in years, undertook, in her great piety, the hardships of a journey to Jerusalem in search of the cross, about the year 325. A temple to Aphrodite had been raised up by the Emperor Hadrian upon Golgotha, to defile and cover with oblivion the place where the saving Passion had been suffered. The venerable Helen had the statue of Aphrodite destroyed, and the earth removed, revealing the Tomb of our Lord, and three crosses. Of these, it was believed that one must be that of our Lord, the other two of the thieves crucified with Him; but Saint Helen was at a loss which one might be the Wood of our salvation. At the inspiration of Saint Macarius, Archbishop of Jerusalem, a lady of Jerusalem, who was already at the point of death from a certain disease, was brought to touch the crosses, and as soon as she came near to the Cross of our Lord, she was made perfectly whole. Consequently, the precious Cross was lifted on high by Archbishop Macarius of Jerusalem; as he stood on the ambo, and when the people beheld it, they cried out, "Lord have mercy." It should be noted that after its discovery, a portion of the venerable Cross was taken to Constantinople as a blessing. The rest was left in Jerusalem in the magnificent church built by Saint Helen, until the year 614. At that time, the Persians plundered Palestine and took the Cross to their own country (see Jan. 22, Saint Anastasius the Persian). Late, in the year 628, Emperor Heraclius set out on a military campaign, retrieved the Cross, and after bringing it to Constantinople, himself escorted it back to Jerusalem, where he restored it to its place.

# First Fruits

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## What Is Our Church?

*(and How Are We To Support It?)*

THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA (OCA) IS AN AUTOCEPHALOUS (self-governing) Church, and is composed of territorial and ethnic Dioceses located within the geographical boundaries of the North American continent. Our Diocese, the Diocese of New York and New Jersey (DNYNJ), is made up of all OCA parishes within the state boundaries of New York and New Jersey.

Each Diocese relies on the financial and prayerful support of its parishes to do its work. In turn, the Dioceses support the OCA's Central Church Administration (CCA) and its work.

For many years, the financial support by parishes has been in the form of annual per-capita assessments. Each parish, based on its reported census, has borne the responsibility of annually remitting to the Diocese a determined amount (\$145, in recent years) per parishioner. Of that amount, a designated portion (determined at the triennial All-American Council) has been remitted by the Diocese to the OCA's CCA for support of its ongoing work. The designated portion was last set at \$90. This has left the Diocese with \$55 per Diocesan parishioner to fund its operations.

After being installed as our Diocesan Hierarchy, Archbishop MICHAEL established the Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors (DDB) program to supplement Diocesan income, in order to fund ministries essential to the vitality of the Diocese. These include assistance for struggling parishes, planting of new mission parishes in parts of the Diocese where there is no Orthodox presence, scholarship assistance for seminary students pursuing vocations in Church leadership, and special events and programs focused on young people, Church School teachers, Church music leaders, and Parish Council members. The DDB program encourages individuals or institutions both within and outside the Diocese to prayerfully and joyfully share with the Diocese whatever funds they desire to share from the abundance of God's blessings. The promise is that *all* money given to the Diocese through the program will be spent *only* on Diocesan programs and departments. A full description of the DDB program may be found on the Diocesan website

([www.nynjoca.org](http://www.nynjoca.org)). Likewise, the 2015 annual financial report of the Diocese may be found on the Diocesan website under the heading titled "Financial Reports".

Wishing to lay aside the un-Scriptural and inequitable per-capita "head tax" assessment system of years past, the hierarchs, clergy, and laypersons assembled at the 18th All-American Council of the OCA in 2015, adopted a Proportional Giving model, whereby each Diocese will contribute an agreed-upon percentage of its unrestricted operating income to the OCA Central Church Administration to fund its operations. The clergy and faithful of the DNYNJ now have the same opportunity – on a diocesan level – to prayerfully and joyfully commit a percentage of their unrestricted income to support the operations and ministries of our Diocese.

## We are being given the opportunity to be a part of a faith-filled transition to a new way of supporting the Church.

What is more, a few of the parishes in the Diocese have taken the initiative to abandon the head-tax, or "dues", system as the means of funding parish operations. Instead, they have made the transition to a Pledging or Stewardship system, in which every member, or member household, privately determines the percentage of their own income that they can contribute to the parish – in gratitude for what God has entrusted to them – and then pledges that dollar amount as their total contribution for the coming budget year.

Ideally, this new way of funding will transform the way we think about giving, and the essential role of "first-fruits stewardship" in financially empowering the Church to do its work.

*(Continued on next page...)*

## The Holy Martyr and Archdeacon Laurence

WHEN THE HOLY ARCHDEACON LAURENCE visited Pope Sixtus, whom they held in prison, he cried out with tears: "Whither art thou gone, father? Why hast thou forsaken thine archdeacon, with whom always thou hast offered the Bloodless Sacrifice?..." Saint Sixtus answered him: "I have not forsaken thee, my son. I am old and go to an easy death, but yet greater sufferings await thee. Know, that after three days upon our death thou shalt follow after me. And now go, take the church treasury and distribute it to the poor and needy Christians." Saint Laurence zealously did the bidding of the holy hierarch.

Having heard that Pope Sixtus had been taken to trial with the deacons, Saint Laurence went there so as to witness their deed, and he said to the holy bishop: "Father, I have already fulfilled thy command, and distributed by hand thine treasury; forsake me not!" Hearing something about treasure, soldiers put him under guard, and the other martyrs were beheaded (†6 August 258). The emperor locked up Saint Laurence in prison and ordered the chief jailer Hyppolitus to keep watch over him. In prison Saint Laurence with prayer healed the sick gathered together with him and he baptized many.

Astonished by this, Hyppolitus himself believed and accepted Baptism together with all his household. Soon Laurence was again brought to the emperor and commanded to produce the hidden treasure. Saint Laurence answered: "Give me a period of three days, and I shalt show thee this treasure." During this time the saint gathered up a crowd of the poor and the sick, who ate only because of the charity of the Church, and bringing them he explained: "Here are the vessels in which is contained the treasure. And everyone, who puts their treasure in these vessels, will receive them in abundance in the Heavenly Kingdom."

**"IF YOU DESIRE TO BECOME EQUAL TO THE APOSTLES, THERE IS NOTHING TO HINDER YOU..."**

WHEREFORE, IF YOU DESIRE TO BECOME EQUAL TO THE APOSTLES, there is nothing to hinder you. For to have arrived at this virtue only suffices for your not at all falling short of them. Let no one therefore wait for miracles. For though the evil spirit is grieved, when he is driven out of a body, yet much more so, when he sees a soul delivered from sin. For indeed this is his great power. (Acts 8:10) This power caused Christ to die, that He might put an end to it. Yea, for this brought in death; by reason of this all things have been turned upside down. If then thou remove this, you have cut out the nerves of the devil...

The saying is not mine, but the blessed Paul's. For when he had said, "Covet earnestly the best gifts," and "yet show I unto you a more excellent way" (1 Corinthians 12:31), he did not speak next of a sign, but of charity, the root of all our good things. If then we practice this, and all the self-denial that flows from it, we shall have no need of signs; even as on the other hand, if we do not practice it, we shall gain nothing by the signs.

Bearing in mind then all this, let us imitate those things whereby the apostles became great. And whereby did they become great? Hear Peter, saying, "Behold we have forsaken all, and followed You; what shall we have therefore?" (Matthew 19:27) Hear also Christ saying to them, "You shall sit upon twelve thrones, and, every one that has forsaken houses, or brethren, or father, or mother, shall receive an hundredfold in this world, and shall inherit everlasting life." **From all worldly things, therefore, let us withdraw ourselves,** and dedicate ourselves to Christ, that we may both be made equal to the apostles according to His declaration, and may enjoy eternal life; unto which may we all attain, by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ to whom be glory and might forever and ever. Amen.

—ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homily 46 On Matthew*



*What Is Our Church? continued...*

Hopefully, this "change of mind" in how we give will inspire individuals and Diocesan parishes to joyfully and willingly assist the Diocese in doing God's work so that we would have an abundance of funding to support even more efforts to bring the Gospel to the world around us.

During the month of June, our Diocesan Treasurer, Matushka Mary Buletza-Breton, made presentations on the concept of Proportional Giving to Parish Council members throughout the Diocese. Hopefully, this information has trickled down into every parish of the Diocese. If it hasn't, then the opportunity to view a video of the presentations will soon exist on our Diocesan website.

Very shortly, each Diocesan parish will receive more detailed information that will outline procedures for migrating from the Assessment method to the Proportional Giving method. The goal is to begin the implementation of Proportional Giving at the beginning of 2017.

As Diocesan faithful, we will be challenged to move away from old and ingrained ways. We will also be given the opportunity to be a part of an historic, positive, and faith-filled transition to a new way of financially supporting the Church. May we all seek to understand and implement this concept, so that our parishes, our Diocese, and our OCA may all do God's work at each and every level of the Church.

—Archpriest Gary Joseph Breton