

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF JUNE 10, 2018

**AS OF JUNE 7th, THE EXACT TIMING OF THE INSTALLATION OF
NEW CHURCH FLOORING IS UNDETERMINED. YOU WILL BE
ADVISED BY PARISH E-MAIL, WEBSITE & FACE BOOK**

SUNDAY/JUNE 10

All Saints of North America

222 Martyrs of China (+1900)

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

Coffee Hour

HOLYAPOSTLES LENT: JUNE 4-28

A fast is observed from meat, dairy, fish
wine & oil. Modifications are posted on
your parish wall calendar and for this
week:

June 10/Sun. Fish, wine & oil

June 11/Mon. Wine & oil

June 12/Tues. Wine & oil

June 14 Thurs. Wine & oil

June 16/Sat. Fish, wine & oil

June 17/Sun. Fish, wine & oil



SATURDAY/JUNE 16

9:30a.m. Akathist to Our Lord; Confessions

5:30p.m. Vespers & Compline; Confessions

SUNDAY/JUNE 17

Third Sunday After Pentecost

New-Martyrs of Turkish Yoke

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

Coffee Hour

ON THE SAINTS

From the Desert Fathers

Abba John said that the saints are like a group of trees, each bearing different fruit, but watered from the same source. The practices of one saint differ from those of another, but it is the same Spirit that works in all of them.



Offerings Week of June 10

Relics Candle: for parishioners; in memory of Ivana; for safe travel.

Olive Oil: in memory of Sarchisian and Bocai families; in memory of Michael, Justina, Anastasia, Rosalie, & Ivana; for the health of Nicholas (birthday); for the health of Mark (birthday); in memory of Susanna.

Wine: for health of Diaconissa Patricia (birthday); for the health of Jerome Sr., Josephine, Aseal and Patricia.

Flowers: in memory of Jean.

Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

June 24, 40th Day of Fr. Vadim Pogrebniak

June 11, 1953 Chariton Mishalenko

June 12, 1979 Nadezhda Lebedz

June 12, 2008 Julia Yadlowsky

June 14, 1978 Anna Williams

June 14, 2012 Theodore Zydiak

June 15, 1959 Leon Martinchuk

June 15, 1973 Maksym Yadlowsky

June 16, 1953 Olga Pawlik

June 17, 1977 David Kloss

June 18, 2002 Irene Marmarinos

Coffee Hour Schedule

Coffee Hour Hosts prepare foods that are simple so you are not absent from the Divine Liturgy.

Lenten Foods – June 4-28

June 10 Sokol, Staina, Sarchisian & Nasledysheva

June 17 Chirnoaga, Moldoveanu, Vajda, & Sue

Counters Schedule

June 10 Ciprian C. & Jill P.

June 17 Irina S. & Lisa K.

Ushers Schedule

June 10 Jerome S. & Adrian M.

June 17 Dennis F. & Robert E.

Readers Schedule

June 10 Austin K. / June 17 Ciprian C.

New Church Flooring Donations Received

The Total Cost of the Project is \$30,000

Total as of June 3rd is \$25,970

House Keeping Items in regard to Children

Parents please make sure your offspring are not eating in the Gazebo, or going upstairs during coffee hour, leaving foods and plates in the Conference Room and meandering about on stairs or in areas other than the Lower Hall. Thanks.

Recognition of Graduates – June 24th

On this Sunday we want to recognize our graduates. Please let Fr. James know as soon possible who they are and where they are graduating from

June 19th, Tues. Study Class 7:00-8:30p.m.

Part Two: "Our Thoughts Direct our Lives." On How we Cope With Bad Thoughts and 8 Considerations of cultivating Good Thoughts.

One Year Memorial Anniversary for Infant Ivana Parsells – June 21st, Thursday

7:00p.m. Memorial at Cemetery and blessing of Cemetery Cross.

2018 Parish Council Conference – June 30th, Saturday in Paramus, NJ 10:00a.m.-3:00p.m at Christ the Savior Church

The theme is "Breathing New Life Into Established Parishes." The Conference is open to all Parishioners, there is no cost (even a free lunch!) (See posted flyers). We hope for a good turn out from our parish. Offer a ride! Let Fr. James know by June 24th (food preparation count).

OCCM – Orthodox Christian Mission Center – Health Team to Guatemala – November 9-18, 2018

Our parish is happy to have one of our parishioners participate in this Mission Work, Lisa Keller. If you wish to help defray the cost of travel you may make a donation for this team member by name at www.occm.org/donate (Guatemala November Health Team) or directly to Lisa.

Names Day Greetings

St. Jerome/June 15: Jerome Stone

St. Augustine/June 15: Austin Kachek

Many Blessed Years!

HOW TO PROPERLY PREPARE FOR THE APOSTLES FAST, AND WHETHER A MODERN PERSON NEEDS TO FAST

Metropolitan Onuphry (Berezovsky)

In this brief interview, His Beatitude Metropolitan Onuphry of Kiev and All Ukraine speaks on fasting, modern man, and role models.

HOLY APOSTLES FAST: JUNE 4-28

—Your Beatitude, Pentecost ends the Paschal cycle. We start counting anew from this week. How does this period differ from the other cycles of the year?

—The holy Church was born on Pentecost, and after the feast it began to actively work and preach; similarly, after Pentecost, a new enumeration of every following Sunday begins in the Church's liturgical year, in which are recalled, besides the mystery of the Resurrection, notable Gospel events or events from Christian history. For example, on the first Sunday, the Synaxis of All Saints is remembered, and on the second, All Saints Who Shone Forth in the Russian Land, and so on.

—The Apostles Fast begins today. Concerning fasting, you often hear that in our nervous age, fasting is just an additional stress. How is fasting useful for modern man?

—After the universal flood, due to man's infirmity, the Lord blessed meat; that is, people began to eat the flesh of animals and birds. But the former life expectancy of man was already gone. This shows us that fasting is not some kind of cruelty on the Lord's part towards His creation. The Lord wants us to return, through fasting, to the former order of this beautiful dispensation that man had in Paradise. In other words, fasting is not a stress for man, but a means that relieves stress.

—What is the proper way to prepare for a fast? What can we do during a fast, and what can we not do?

—In the fasts we limit ourselves, firstly from non-fasting food. Vegetation is natural for man and the most beneficial to his health. When people are seriously ill, or when old age sets in, even doctors don't recommend eating heavy meats. They're better for young people, for those who have strong bodies, and for those doing hard physical labor. And the holy Church, knowing what is good for man, advises to abstain from meat products during Great Lent to restore harmony to our body and that natural order that God established in every man. When we fast, our bodies restructure themselves. If someone always eats meat, it might be hard for him to live just on vegetation at first. But this is a positive reaction, and after a while, everything is restored, and he will feel fine. If someone who has smoked for a long time is forced to quit, he starts to have psychoses and some

unpleasant changes in his body. But that doesn't mean he needs to smoke in such a malaise—it's just a positive reaction to his healing.

—What can happen to someone who doesn't fast?

—Someone who fasts has personal experience of overcoming various difficulties and temptations in life, but someone who doesn't fast is deprived of such experience. I wish that we would all be enriched by the experience of spiritual struggle, through which we travel to spiritual perfection. This is what the holy Church calls us to today through the blessing of the Apostles Fast. It should also be remembered that when a person joins in the bodily and spiritual fast, then an especially intensive spiritual development begins, ascending from degree to degree, or, as the holy Church says, spiritual perfection, which begins on Earth and continues eternally in the Heavenly life.

—And a final, personal question. Do you have a role model?

—All of us Christians try to emulate our Savior and Creator; after all, everyone has God within Himself: As soon as a man is born, the Godhead already sanctifies and fills him. Some saints had the opportunity to see God even with their own eyes; they were filled inside with Divine light, which expanded their hearts and souls until they could see God Himself. However, there were few such people to whom the Lord Himself appeared. Among them was St. Silouan the Athonite. When the Lord was somewhat distant from him, St. Silouan suffered greatly because he no longer saw Christ during prayer, which was infinitely more difficult for him then. St. Silouan is a role model, for he shows us how we must draw nearer to Christ even in this earthly life through labors and prayer. Another example of holiness, very beneficial for modern man, is St. Mary of Egypt, who through labors and prayer turned from a great sinner into a great saint. We are not capable of such *podvigs*, but we must know that when a person gradually, from fast to fast, from fasting day to fasting day, tries to abstain, to keep himself within the bounds of the Divine law, he also comes to his own measure of perfection, and is granted mercy from God both here, on Earth, and in Heaven—in the eternal Kingdom.

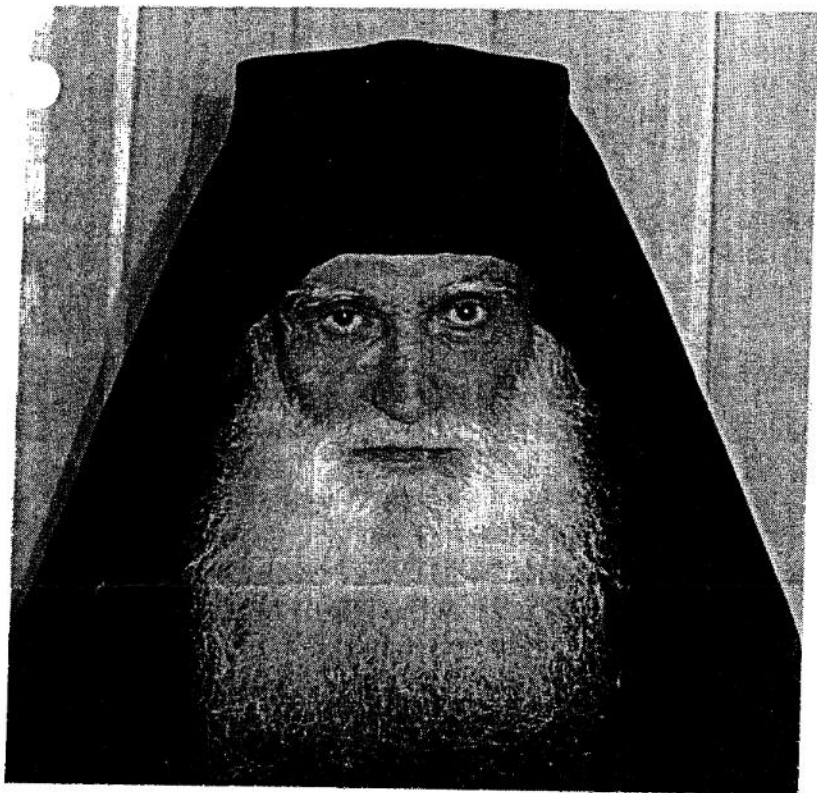
Metropolitan Onuphry (Berezovsky)

THE UNBREAKABLE SPIRITUAL LAW

The Venerable Saint Seraphim of Sarov (+1834) was once asked what is lacking in a person that he fails in his spiritual efforts. The Saint responded, "Just one thing," he said, "a firm resolve." Yet, another great saint of the land of Rus, St. Theophan the Recluse (+1894) when asked the same question said: "In every aspect of the spiritual life – prayer, fasting, reading the Scriptures, the keeping of the commandments, the discovering of the will of God, and all else – you will achieve nothing by your own effort alone; yet God will not give you anything unless you work with all your strength. This is the unbreakable spiritual law."

St. Macarius the Great (+390) says this about spiritual effort: "To struggle, yes, to continue to fight, to inflict blows, and to receive setbacks is in your power. To uproot, however, belongs to God alone. If you could have done it on your own, what would have been the need for the coming of the Lord? For just as an eye cannot see without light, nor can one speak without a tongue, nor hear without ears, nor walk without feet, nor carry on works without hands, so you cannot be saved without Jesus nor enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."





A LETTER TO A SPIRITUAL CHILD FROM A MONK OF MOUNT ATHOS

This letter is from Elder Ephraim of Katounakia on Athos. The Elder spent 65 years on Mount Athos, reposing on February 14, 1998, at the age of 86.

Like many elderly people, he was afflicted with illnesses - ulcers on his legs, loss of eyesight, severe eczema, ischaemic strokes and allergies. In the last years of his life, no standing, lying or sitting position gave him comfort.

Yet, as we see in the letter, the Elder was able to profit from his suffering.

May we also learn to be strong when we are weak and see God's love at work.

You wrote to me that you pray to God to relieve me from all my pains and so, I want to ask you to not pray for me like this. Instead, I want you to plead with God to give me patience, not relief. The Holy Fathers teach us many things but our poor experience teaches us much more, and more powerful things.

So, I confess to you:

Six years ago, I was in the Clerical Hospital in Athens due to my eczema. When I was released I went on a pilgrimage to St. Nektarios, in Aegina. When I knelt and kissed his holy skull I sensed a fine scent emanating from it and I took it to mean that many more afflictions awaited me and this is exactly what happened.

When we returned to Kallithea, Athens, I lay down on the bed to rest and I told Father J. who was with me: 'I feel as exhausted as if a hundred men have thrashed me'.

Ever since, all these years, I have been bedridden; you know all of this.

Many years ago I suffered from a cyst on the coccyx, which was unbearably painful. Due to my long stay in bed my behind hurt very much, they were stinging, which was a sign that sores were about to open.

Those sores were even more painful than the first ones.

I couldn't lie down on my right; the pain was horrible. The wound on my leg, the eczema, was at its worst.

And while in this ocean of affliction, at this dead end, I saw myself completely alone, fighting desperately against those bitter and unbearable waves. I realized that despair had gotten hold of me and suffocated me. Even thinking about this makes me tremble with horror.

I couldn't lie down on my left; the pain was terrible. I tried to lie on my back I couldn't; it hurt too much. 'What should I do? What will become of me? How will I end up?'

I was disturbed and pressed by disgraceful thoughts, terrible ones.

I even thought that God abandoned me.

I said nothing to my brotherhood. Outwardly, I appeared to be calm and peaceful but inside I was experiencing hell itself. That's what I had been taught by my elder: whether we experience heaven or hell we should never externalize it; we should appear impassive.

I was in this state for about six or seven minutes and then it was as if I heard a faint voice, that could barely be heard, telling me: 'That's how God wants you to be' and at once I came to my senses.

I replied to that voice: 'Since this is God's will, let this be blessed. Just give me the patience needed to deal with it'.

I then went, feeling more dead than alive, up to a small oil-lamp hanging in front of the icon of the Theotokos, I took some oil and smeared it twice or three times on the places that hurt most and I was healed.

However, the years went by and I was constantly in pain. Many times I clenched my teeth and stifled my groans of pain. I try to bear the pain, and I cannot sleep.

I believe this was an ordeal sent by God.

And now I move on to my main theme—listen to what I have to say carefully, my dear little teacher.

It's been seven or eight months now since God approached me from the right side. He opened the eyes of

my soul and I realized how much profit I have gained from this wound, how much reward is waiting for me, how much I have gained.

'I thank you God a thousand times.

I will never cease praising You as long as I live in this world; I will never stop chanting to You, kneeling before You, thanking You for this wound that You gave me.

Your boundless love, inconceivably deep and high, was revealed to me by this wound.

Thanks to Your glory - thanks to Your love - thanks to Your compassion - thanks to Your infinite mercy.

Thanks to You - Thanks to You - Thanks to You.

You are hidden there, in that wound.

Did you really love me, this dirt and stink, that much? Me, this dirt, this stink?

What good did I do to make you love me so much that you gave me this wound as a token of Your great love?'

This wave of gratitude lasted three days and three nights and then disappeared. After that I was soared with unutterable joy, I was in an ocean of spiritual happiness and other such feelings.

This I keep as a cornerstone, as a bedrock in my various sorrows, in the various afflictions of this bogus earthly life.

And so I tell you that whenever I am in pain, I am always happy deep down inside me. And when my pains are lessened I feel sad. Still, I am not indifferent to their cure.

It's only now that I understand why all the saints were happy about their sorrows. And I also now realize why the highest of the Apostles boasted of his sufferings, his illness, his cross.

And I also realize why St. John Chrysostom praises Job more when he suffered all the ordeals and while he was patient during his afflictions than when in his earlier life when he was righteous and pious and charitable and hospitable.

Now I understand by experience why all the saints suffered various ordeals of affliction and were tested through these whether they love God. God himself says: 'For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life' (Mt. 7:14).

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Our late elder used to tell us that his entire life was a daily martyrdom. He was seldom happy; he was in sorrow night and day, and he was sad, and he cried.

Let me tell you something else as well. I think—at least this is what has been revealed to me—that God offered me a great gift by giving me this wound and these pains. Because the joy has no rewards, but sorrow does. 'Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things' (Lk. 16:25).

So, aiming at that reward, I am patient with the help of God. It's true, physically I might suffer, hurt, be in pain, but deep in my soul joy is what I feel.

Still, I don't neglect the care of my wound, with the help of various medicines, and doctors, and diets, and any reasonable way I think I might be cured.

Yesterday, while the Divine Liturgy was being celebrated, a first-class cantor came to our church and chanted. While he was chanting I said to myself: 'Father, you chant and this you offer to God and thus you are happy. I, on the other hand, have nothing but my pain and suffering to offer to God in order to be shown His mercy'.

Whatever each one of us has to offer, this he will offer to God. Still, joy is very different to sorrow, health from illness, day from night.

Since you claim that you love God, wait for the proof of His love, meaning His Cross. This He will give you during this life, this gift, which is His love.

That is how you understand that God loves you: from the sorrows He gives you.

If we truly want to be His disciples, not only in word but also in deed, we must ascend the Cross just as He, our leader, did.

'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me' (Mt. 16:24).

By the cross He means afflictions and tears.

Whatever each one of us has suffered in his earthly life for Christ's sake, will be revealed on Judgement Day.

And blessed will be he who has many sufferings and a heavy cross to reveal.

May God forgive me for this verbosity of mine.

Blessed be His name now and forever.

With paternal wishes,
Father Ephraim from Katounakia
July 20th, 1989

