

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF AUGUST 4, 2019

SUNDAY/AUGUST 4

7th Sunday After Pentecost

Seven Sleepers of Ephesus (+250)

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

Food Basket Day; Coffee Hour; Library Open

MONDAY/AUGUST 5

7:00p.m. Vigil with blessing of fruits

TUESDAY/AUGUST 6

Transfiguration of our Lord

(One of the "12 Great Feasts")

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

with blessing of fruits

THURSDAY/AUGUST 8

7:00p.m. Vespers with anointing of oil

from tomb of St. Herman; Confessions

FRIDAY/AUGUST 9

St. Herman of Alaska (+1837)

7:40a.m. Hours; 8:00a.m. Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY/AUGUST 10

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

3:00p.m. Confessions

5:30p.m. Vigil with anointing of oil from
tomb of St. Spyridon; Confessions

SUNDAY/AUGUST 11

7th Sunday After Pentecost

Miracle of St. Spyridon in 1816

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

Coffee Hour; Library Open



The Church — a Eucharistic Community

The essential nature of the Orthodox Church and its Communion Service can be described with three words of Greek origin: *ecclesia*, *leitourgia*, *eucharistia*.

The word *ecclesia* expresses the idea of the Church as the people of God, called together again and again to assemble in one place. When we ask why the people of God gather again and again, the answer is provided in the word *leitourgia*, which in Greek originally meant a public service.

When we further ask what is the common service for which the people of God are called together again and again, the question is answered in the word *eucharistia*: they come together to give thanks to God, to bring Him a thank-offering.

Although the Church has its own historical foundation, form and order, it is not essentially a rigid body, but a community which is always in living motion. It becomes the Church each and every time the people of God assemble to celebrate the Eucharist together. And in this coming together each of the faithful becomes what he is through Baptism — a member of the Church in the full sense of the word, a member of the Body of Christ. "Now you are the Body of Christ, and members individually" (I Cor 12:27).

Offerings Week of August 4

Relics candle: in honor of St. John of San Francisco; in memory of Michael, Melania, Justina, Rosalie, Anastasia and Ivanna; in memory of Nicholas, Eleanore, Ann Marie, John and Jerome.

Olive Oil: for the health of Vera and in memory of Jan; in memory of Sarafina; in memory of Bocai and Sarchisian families.

Wine: in memory of Panteleimon; for the health of Maria.

Flowers: in honor of the Theotokos, our Great Protectress.

Litya Breads: for the health of Ekaterina.

Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

Aug. 05, 1966 Jacob Hosko
Aug. 05, 1977 Joseph Pituch
Aug. 05, 1988 Lepasava Ratzkovich
Aug. 06, 1943 Sarafina Spak
Aug. 06, 1946 Jacob Russaway
Aug. 06, 1974 Artem Kuchner
Aug. 06, 1989 Andrew Gavlick
Aug. 06, 2015 Peter La Verne Mickel
Aug. 07, 1916 Anna Wislosky
Aug. 07, 1931 Michael Gargol
Aug. 07, 1932 Maria Vozny
Aug. 07, 1941 Helen Martchisin
Aug. 08, 1945 Mary Lebedz
Aug. 08, 1949 Shelia Mc Closket
Aug. 09, 1916 George Siplak
Aug. 09, 1939 Michael Sapochuk
Aug. 09, 1979 Parasceva Kulwinsky

Coffee Hour Schedule

Aug. 11: Dormition Lent: no
meat, dairy or fish
Aug. 11 Inga, Eka, Marina & Nona
Aug. 18 Sokol, Nasledysheva, Sarchisian
& Staina

Counters Schedule

Aug. 11 Ciprian C. & Jill P.
Aug. 18 Irina S. & Lisa K.

Ushers Schedule

Aug. 11 Jerome S. & Adrian M.
Aug. 18 Dennis F. & Robert E.

Reader's Schedule

Aug. 11 Austin K. /Aug. 18 Ciprian C.

Sunday Coffee Hour Hosts – Please remember

All setting up needs to be completed before Liturgy starts. Only after the time of Communion should you leave the church for further preparations. For the Sundays of August 4th and 11th, foods should be Lenten (that is, no meat, dairy or fish).

The Dormition Lent: August 1st-14th

This two week fast is in honor of the repose, burial, resurrection and ascension into heaven of the Holy Mother of God. Every Lenten season is one of "repentance" and an appropriate time for going to Holy Confession.

A fast is observed from meat, dairy and fish. Days permitting modifications to the fast are found on parish wall calendar and the Sunday Bulletins.

Aug. 04/Sun. wine & oil
Aug. 06/Tues. fish, wine & oil (Transfiguration)
Aug. 09/Fri. fish, wine & oil (St. Herman)
Aug. 10/Sat. wine & oil
Aug. 11/Sun. wine & oil
Aug. 13/Tues. fish, wine & oil (St. Tikhon)

On Receiving Holy Communion

Regular Communicants must go to Confession in August month to be able to continue to receive Holy Communion, if they have not been to Confession any time after Pascha (April 28th).

If you are a regular communicant, and miss being at the Sunday Divine liturgy for more than 3 weeks in a row, you must go to Confession before you resume receiving the Holy Gifts.

St. Porphyrios of Athos (+1993) On Christ Being our Friend and Brother

Because Christ is our Friend, He is our Brother. He shouts out: "You are my friends; I don't want you to look at me differently. I don't want you to look at me in that way that I am God. I am the Word of God. I am a Person of the Holy Trinity. I want you to see Me as one of your own, as your friend. I want you to embrace Me. I want you to feel me in your souls, Me, your friend."

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD

From the Prologue of St. Nikolai Velimirovich



In the third year of His preaching, the Lord Jesus often spoke to His disciples of His approaching passion but at the same time of His glory following His suffering on the Cross. So that His impending passion would not totally weaken His disciples and that no one would fall away from Him, He, the All-wise, wanted to partially show them His divine glory before His passion. For that reason, He took Peter, James and John

with Him and, with them, went out at night to Mt. Tabor and there was transfigured before them: "And His face shone as the sun and His garments became white as snow" (St. Matthew 17:2). There appeared alongside Him, Moses and Elijah, the great Old Testament prophets. And, seeing this, His disciples were amazed. Peter said: "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if You will, let us make here three tabernacles; one for You, one for Moses and one for Elijah" (St. Matthew 17:4). While Peter still spoke, Moses and Elijah departed and a bright cloud overshadowed the Lord and His disciples and there came a voice from the cloud saying: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear Him" (St. Matthew 17:5). Hearing the voice, the disciples fell to the ground on their faces as though dead and remained that way, lying in fear, until the Lord came near to them and said: "Arise and be not afraid" (St. Matthew 17:7). Why did the Lord take only three disciples on Tabor and not all? Because

Judas was not worthy to behold the divine glory of the Teacher, Whom he will betray and the Lord did not want to leave him [Judas] alone at the foot of the mountain so that the betrayer would not, by that, justify his betrayal. Why was our Lord transfigured on a mountain and not in a valley? So as to teach us two virtues: love of labor and godly-thoughts. For, climbing to the heights required labor and height represents the heights of our thoughts, i.e., godly-thoughts. Why was our Lord transfigured at night? Because, the night

Troparion (Tone 7)

Thou wast transfigured on the Mount, O Christ God, revealing Thy glory to Thy disciples as far as they could bear it. Let Thine everlasting light shine upon us sinners! Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Giver of Light, glory to Thee!

Kontakion (Tone 7)

On the mountain wast Thou transfigured, O Christ God, and Thy disciples beheld Thy glory as far as they could see it; so that when they would behold Thee crucified, they would understand that Thy suffering was voluntary, and would proclaim to the world that Thou art truly the Radiance of the Father!

St. Porphyrios of Athos (+1993) on Jesus as our friend

We ought to feel that Jesus is our Friend. He is our friend. He confirms this when he says: "You are my friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what His Master is doing; but I have called you friends...." (John 15:14). We ought to look up to Him and approach Him as our friend. If we fall, if we commit an offense, we ought to approach Him with love and courage and be filled with trust bestowed upon us by our mutual friendship, without fearing His punishment. We ought to tell Him, "Yes lord, I have done this, I have fallen forgive me." At the same time we ought to feel that he loves us, that he receives us with tenderness and love and that he forgives us. Let our trespasses not separate us from Jesus.

Fr. Thomas Hopko (+2015) on Jesus as our Friend

Sometimes we Orthodox don't like to speak about Jesus as our Friend. It sounds too Protestant. We hear the song in our ears, "What a friend we have in Jesus." And "Jesus is my buddy, Jesus is my friend." We want to say, "Jesus is not my buddy! God is not a smiley face on a bumper sticker. God is majestic. God is awesome. God is fearful. God is glory. God is holy, holy, holy God! How can you say 'friend?'" But you've got to say Friend. It's Scriptural; it's biblical. Jesus is our Friend.

rather than the day is more suitable for prayer and godly-thoughts and because the night, by its darkness, conceals all the beauty of the earth and reveals the beauty of the starry heavens. Why did Moses and Elijah appear? In order to destroy the error of the Jews, as though Christ is one of the prophets; Elijah or Jeremiah or some other that is why He appears as a King above the prophets and that is why Moses and Elijah appear as His servants. Until then, our Lord manifested His divine power many times to the disciples but, on Mt. Tabor, He manifested His divine nature. This vision of His Divinity and the hearing of the heavenly witness about Him as the Son of God, should serve the disciples in the days of the Lord's passion, in strengthening of an unwavering faith in Him and His final victory.

CONCERNING THE JESUS PRAYER

In the First Epistle to the Thessalonians the Apostle Paul says: "Pray without ceasing." How then, is one to pray unceasingly? By often repeating the Jesus Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me." By becoming accustomed to this appeal, great consolation and the need to continually make this petition will be felt within, and it will be carried on, as if of itself, within one.

Although in the beginning the enemy of the human race will offer hindrances to this, by causing great weariness, indolence, boredom and overcoming sleep, having withstood all these with the help of God, one will receive peace of soul, spiritual joy, a benevolent disposition towards people, purification of thoughts, and gratitude towards God.

In the very Name of Jesus a great and graceful power is present.

Many holy and righteous people advise

repeating the Jesus Prayer as frequently as possible; almost without interruption.

It is necessary for everyone, whether eating, drinking, sitting, serving, travelling, or in doing anything, to ceaselessly lament: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me" in order that the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, in descending into the depths of our hearts, may humble the serpent of destruction, and save and enlighten the soul.

St. Seraphim of Sarov: "'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' Let your attention and instruction be centered on this. Walking, eating, standing in church before the beginning of the service, continue with the prayer; on entering and departing keep this prayer on your lips and within your heart. In such a manner, with the invocation of the Name of God you will find peace, you will attain to purity of spirit and body; and the Holy Spirit, the Origin of all good, will make

for Himself a dwelling within you and will guide you in all piety and purity."

Bishop Theophanes the Recluse: "To more conveniently become accustomed to remembering God, the fervent Christian has a special means, namely, to repeat ceaselessly a brief prayer of two or three words. Mostly this is 'Lord, have mercy.' or 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' If you have not yet heard of this, then hear it now, and if you have not done it, then begin from this hour to do it."

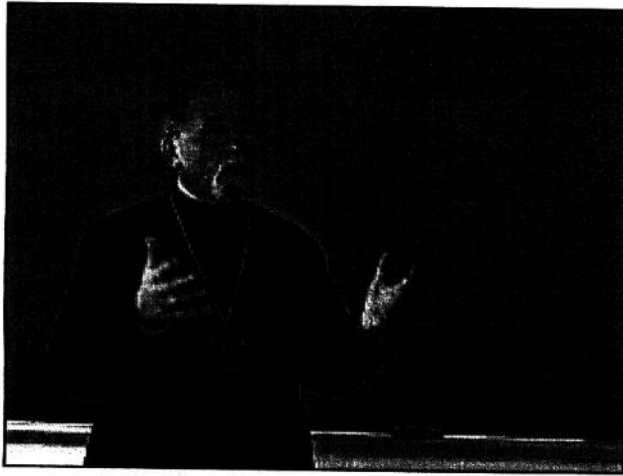
Those who have truly decided to serve the Lord God must train themselves in the remembrance of God and in unceasing prayer to Jesus Christ, saying mentally: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

Through such activity, and by guarding oneself from distraction, and with the preservation of peace in one's conscience, it is possible to draw near to God and to be united with Him. For, according to the

words of St. Isaac the Syrian, "Except for unceasing prayer we cannot draw near to God" (St. Seraphim of Sarov).

Fr. John of Kronstadt also counselled frequently the use of the Prayer of Jesus.





THE PARISH COMMUNITY: OUR LIFE IN CHRIST FROM "THE ORTHODOX PARISH IN NORTH AMERICA"

by VRev. Thomas Hopko

Mind: Education and Enlightenment

Essential also to an Orthodox parish, if it is Christ's holy Church, is total mobilization of efforts to love God with all of one's mind through enlightenment and education.

Jesus' first title in the Scriptures is Rabbi, which means teacher or master (Greek: didaskalos, Latin; magister). As messianic pastor and priest, Christ is also "the prophet" who brings ultimate and lasting judgment upon those who

hear and reject him. (John 1:21, 6:14; Acts 3:22-26) The Lord's first followers are called disciples or students. And the first thing that is said about those who believed in God's Gospel of Christ crucified and glorified is that they "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine." (Acts 2:42)

An Orthodox Christian parish, therefore, is essentially a teaching and learning community for all its members. It is a school of disciples whose master is Christ as He speaks within the community of believers, especially through the pastors and those with the charism and training for teaching and preaching.

An Orthodox parish without well-prepared evangelical and exegetical sermons at its liturgical services, and well-prepared doctrinal and catechetical sessions as part of its educational ministry, whatever else it might do, including having lots of liturgical services and loads of social events, can hardly be an Orthodox Christian Church. This is especially true now in North America when Christianity generally, not to speak of Orthodoxy, is not a respected, accepted and supported part of public life and education, but is rather warred against, scorned and ridiculed by powerful forces in society.

A HOMILY ON SAVING GRACE

By St. Nikolai Velimirovich

Who can comprehend and acknowledge that we are saved by grace—that we are saved by God's grace, and not by our merits and works? Who can comprehend and acknowledge that? Only he who has comprehended and seen the bottomless pit of death and corruption in which man is engulfed by sin, and has also comprehended and seen the height of honor and glory to which man is raised in the Heavenly Kingdom, in the realm of immortality, in the house of the Living God—only such a one can comprehend and acknowledge that we are saved by grace. A child was traveling by night. He stumbled and fell into hole after hole and pit after pit, until he finally fell into a very deep pit from which he could in no way escape by his own power. When the child gave himself over to the hands of fate and thought his end was near, there was suddenly someone standing over the pit, lowering a rope to him and telling him to grab the rope and hold firmly to it. This was the king's son, who then took the child home, bathed him, clothed him and brought him to his court and set him beside himself. Was this child saved by his own deed? By no means. All he did was to grab the end of the rope, and hold on. By what, then, was the child saved? By the mercy of the king's son. In God's relationship with men, this mercy is called grace. By grace ye are saved. The Apostle Paul repeats these words twice in a short span, that the faithful might recognize and remember them.



Brethren, let us comprehend and remember that we are saved through grace by the Lord Jesus Christ. We were in the jaws of death, but have been given life in the courts of our God.

O Lord Jesus Christ our Savior, by Thee are we saved. To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

The Blessing of Fruit

by

ALEXANDER SCHMEMANN



It is an ancient custom in Orthodox churches to bless fruits and vegetables on the feast of Transfiguration. This prompts us to ask ourselves: what is the meaning of this ancient rite, and of blessing, sanctification in general, since the blessing of fruit on Transfiguration is only one of many such rites? If we open the liturgical service book where all these rites are collected, the so-called "Book of Needs," we find special services such as blessings for a new home, a field, a garden, a well. It is as if the Church addresses itself to the entire world, as if God's right hand of blessing were being extended over all through these rites of blessing and sanctification. Why have people from time immemorial felt the need for blessings?

We must say immediately that proponents of anti-religious propaganda unquestioningly regard all these rites as superstition which, in their view, is the whole content of religion. They argue that superstition is a product of fear: a person is afraid of being poisoned, afraid of a bad harvest, afraid that his house will burn down, afraid of other people. Religion purveys deliverance from fear: sprinkle the fruit or the garden or the home with holy water and God will protect both them and you. "So you see, it's all crude ignorance, superstition and...deception." However, in presenting the issue this way, atheist propaganda does not mention any of the prayers or rites involved with these supposed superstitions. They make it sound as if priests, the clergy, are a cadre of swindlers who exploit fear and ignorance by using incomprehensible magical incantations. But if one actually listens to these prayers and looks closely at these rites, if only once in a lifetime one experiences the joy of that radiant and sunlit Transfiguration noonday blessing, then it becomes clear that the deception is not coming from the Church, but from ill-willed atheist propaganda. It is precisely this propaganda, and not the Church's prayer, which is permeated with fear, mistrust, and a need to denounce anything more elevated, more pure, more profound than its own simplistic, mundane, and materialistic approach to the world and to life. For what we see and hear and experience above all in these rites and prayers is joy and thanksgiving. But if fear were present, there could be no joy and no thanksgiving; and conversely, if joy is present, there can be no fear. Fear produces misery and mistrust, but there is none of this in transfiguration's light. But what is the source of this joy and thanksgiving?

One of Osip Mandelstam's poems, devoted to the eucharistic liturgy, the main service of Christian worship, includes this wonderful verse: "Take into your hands the whole world, as if it were a simple apple..." Perhaps here, because it is so simple and childlike, we see better than anywhere else the source of joy and thanksgiving that permeate Christian faith. In an apple, and in everything within the world, faith sees, recognizes, and accepts God's gift, filled with love, beauty and wisdom. Faith hears the apple and the world speaking of that boundless love that created the world and life and gave them to us

as our life. The world itself is the fruit of God's love for humanity, and only through the world can human beings recognize God and love him in return... And only in truly loving his own life, can a person thereby accept the life of the world as God's gift. Our fall, our sin, is that we take everything for granted—and therefore everything, including ourselves, becomes routine, depressing, empty. The apple becomes just an apple. Bread is just bread. A human being is just a human being. We know their weight, their appearance, their activities, we know everything about them, but we no longer know them, because we do not see the light that shines through them. The eternal task of faith and of the Church is to overcome this sinful, monotonous habituation; to enable us to see once again what we have forgotten how to see; to feel what we no longer feel; to experience what we are no longer capable of experiencing. Thus, the priest blesses bread and wine, lifting them up to heaven, but faith sees the bread of life, it sees sacrifice and gift, it sees communion with life eternal.

So, on Transfiguration we bring to church apples, pears, grapes, vegetables, and suddenly the church itself is transformed anew into that mystical garden, into that blessed paradise where man's life and his encounter with God began. And just as that first man rejoiced and gave thanks to God as he opened his eyes for the first time and saw this world where everything, by God's own word, was "very good," so in this rite of blessing we see the world as if for the first time, as the reflection of God's wisdom and love, and we rejoice and give thanks. And through this joy and thanksgiving our life is purified, renewed and reborn. No, we do not negate the material world, as atheist propaganda falsely claims, nor do we repudiate it; on the contrary, we sanctify and bless it, for in it we joyfully and with thanksgiving see and feel the gift of God. "Heaven and earth are full of your glory," we sing in church. The significance of blessing is that through it, this glory breaks into our drowsy consciousness, opens our ears, opens our eyes, and life itself becomes praise, joy and thanksgiving.

But what about evil, people ask me. What about suffering, what about death? To this we answer: if we are filled to the brim with this light, if we genuinely accept this blessing and sanctification and bring them within, then we ourselves become the place where the victory over evil begins. And death will be swallowed up in victory, for we live in a world where Christ lived and continues forever to be present. And if in everything and everyone in the world we see him, love him, give ourselves to him; if in all, we see the light of his presence, his love, and his victory—then nothing can separate us from him.