



Christ raises a widow's dead son.

CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

1400 Coastal Highway; Fenwick Island, DE
302-537-6055 (church) / 302-988-1138 (rectory)
orthodoxdelmarva.org / frjohn@orthodoxdelmarva.org

BULLETIN OF OCTOBER 7, 2007

Please Remember in Prayer

Bill Yanuk, who is recovering from surgery. If you have a prayer request, please let Fr. John know and he will share it.

A Class on our Faith – Orthodoxy 101

will begin on Monday, October 29th, at 7pm at the church. This class, which will meet twice a month, will be for inquirers as well as those who are already Orthodox. Dates and topics for each class will be posted in advance. There will be no required reading (and no exams!). The first two classes will be an overview of Church history; the first and second millennia. For more information, please speak with Fr. John.



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7TH

19TH SUNDAY OF PENTECOST

8:40a.m. Hours
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13TH

6:00p.m. Vespers

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14TH

20TH SUNDAY OF PENTECOST

8:40a.m. Hours
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour



Update from Symeon Province

On page two of this bulletin there is a letter from Symeon Province. Symeon, as you know, is one of the newest members to our Mission and to Orthodoxy as he was received into the Church this past Pentecost. He is now studying in China for the academic year. Symeon has been corresponding with Fr. John and has sent a message to you all, the parishioners of Christ the Savior. Please remember Symeon in your prayers.

It is a great virtue to accept patiently whatever comes and to love a neighbor who hates you. The sign of sincere love is to forgive wrongs done to us. It is with this love that the Lord loved the world. We cannot with all our heart forgive someone who does us wrong unless we possess real knowledge, for this knowledge shows us that we deserve all we experience.

Saint Mark the Ascetic

An Invitation from Four Evangelists Orthodox Mission

On Sunday, October 21, 2007, the Four Evangelists Orthodox Mission of Bel Air, MD, is having a Banquet Dinner in honor of the 5-year anniversary of their establishment. The Banquet will be from 2:00pm – 6:00pm in the Skylight Room of the Clarion Hotel in Aberdeen, MD. Should you be interested in attending please speak with Fr. John today, October 7th, in order to make the RSVP date. Should you wish to make a donation for their Program Booklet, please see Fr. John as soon as possible. Please do your best to support one of our sister Missions.



READER SCHEDULE

Sunday, Oct. 14th

Hours: Jen Alexion
Epistle: Jen Alexion

Sunday, October 21st

Hours: Mat. Emily
Epistle: Mat. Emily



AN INTERESTING COMPARISON

A woman was asked by a coworker, 'What is it like to be a Christian?' The coworker replied, 'It is like being a pumpkin.' God picks you from the patch, brings you in, and washes all the dirt off of you. Then He cuts off the top and scoops out all the yucky stuff. He removes the seeds of doubt, hate, and greed. Then He carves you a new smiling face and puts His light inside of you to shine for all the world to see.'



THE LIFE OF SAINT PETER THE TAX-COLLECTOR

Commemorated September 22nd

Saint Peter, Former Tax-Collector, was the chief collector of taxes in Africa in the service of the emperor Justinian (527-565). He was a cruel and merciless man.

One day he threw a morsel of bread to a beggar who annoyed him by incessantly begging alms. In a vision Peter saw himself as dead and how the holy Angels weighed his deeds on the scale of the righteous judgment of God. On the side of good deeds nothing



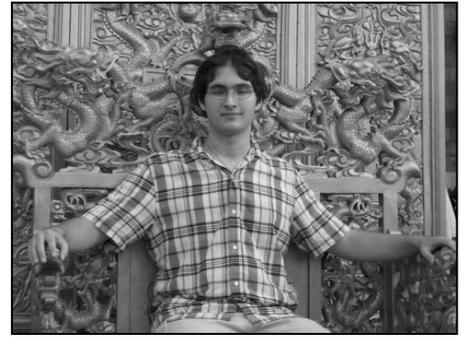
was placed except a morsel of bread, thrown at the beggar, but this prevented the opposite side from being pulled down by his vicious deeds.

Peter pondered the meaning of the dream, and thought that if one loaf of bread, thrown involuntarily, was of such help to him, then he might receive much more help for good deeds performed with compassion and from the heart. He repented and completely changed his life. He liberally distributed alms to the needy, and fed and clothed many.

One day, in a dream, Peter saw Jesus Christ. The Lord was dressed in clothes which the saint once gave to a beggar. Peter then distributed his substance to the poor and ordered his slave to sell him into slavery and to give the money to the poor. The slave reluctantly carried out the orders of his master.

For many years St Peter worked diligently and humbly for his master. One day he was recognized by tradesmen to whom he had been known earlier. They told the master who his servant was. Having overheard this conversation, the saint quickly fled from the city. In departing, he worked a miracle: the gatekeeper, a deaf-mute slave, was ordered by St Peter to open the gates in the name of Jesus Christ. He fulfilled the command, and at once received his hearing and speech. He rushed around everywhere to tell his master and added moreover, that when the saint commanded him to open the gates, fire came forth from his mouth touching his face, after which he began to hear and speak. Everyone went to look for Peter, but the search proved in vain. The saint hid and remained hidden until his death.

The Life of St Peter was passed along by St John the Merciful, Patriarch of Alexandria (November 12), who in turn knew it from a man personally acquainted with the saint.

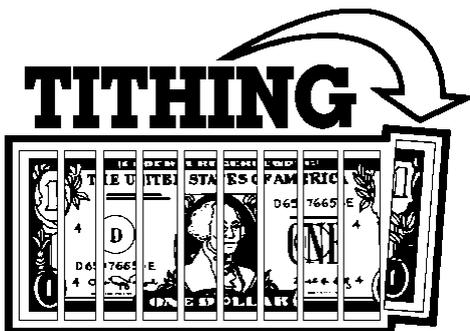


FROM SYMEON PROVINCE

I am currently attending school at South West University in the Beibei district of Chongqing, China. I have a rigorous schedule of four classes, each addressing a different aspect of the Chinese language. So I've been kept busy. It's extremely hot here, but I've seen lots of exciting things and met many people. The Foreign Students dorm is truly international, so I haven't been exposed to Chinese culture only.

Unfortunately, it will be some time until I can attend a Liturgy. I miss you all. So keep me in your prayers.

God bless,
Symeon



TITHING TEACHES

Tithing teaches the happy virtue of gratitude. We tend to think of ourselves as "self-made." We forget that all we have, we have received. Tithing changes the attitude too, for tithing is an acknowledgement that "it is God that hath made us and not we ourselves." (Psalm 100:3)

The person who tithes is saying "Thank You" to God for health, food, family, love and life. Tithing teaches that the love of God is the creative factor in every person's life.



GOD'S LAW: THREAT OR PROMISE?

By the Very Rev. John Breck



"Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, to the glory of God!" (Romans 15:7)

When he wrote his various letters to churches around the Mediterranean and throughout Asia Minor, the apostle Paul used a literary convention widespread in the Hellenistic world. He began with a personal identification and blessing, followed by a word of thanksgiving for all that God had accomplished through his ministry in the life of that particular community. Then he moved on to the body of the letter, combining proclamation of the Gospel with practical teachings. This was followed toward the end by a series of exhortations: directives indicating practical, concrete ways his teachings should be put into effect within the church. Finally, he concluded with greetings to members of the community and a final benediction.

We find a good example of the apostle's exhortations in the brief passage, Romans 15:1-7. Based on the Gospel proclamation that makes up the body of the letter, these words draw out specific consequences for believers, consequences that take the form of responsibilities or obligations. He concludes the passage, "Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, to the glory of God."

There are two extremely different ways we can read exhortations of this kind. They can be taken, as they so often are, in a legalistic sense, as strict commands that tell us how to conform our behavior to the will of a just and righteous God. Or they can be seen as means of grace, by which God Himself works out a transformation in our life, leading to our eternal sharing in His very existence.

The juridical or legalistic approach is one we often identify with Western (Roman Catholic and Protestant) Christianity. But there is no question that it has infected Orthodoxy as well. In this perspective, God is viewed primarily as the righteous Judge, who gives us laws or commandments -- various rules and regulations -- to govern our conduct. Because God is righteous, He cannot accept our sinful unrighteousness. Therefore we must put things right with Him. This we do by obeying His commandments. At the Last Judgment, we shall

be brought before the heavenly tribunal, to be judged on the way and degree to which we have obeyed God's Law, God's commands. If we have been obedient to them, God will vindicate us. If not, then God will punish us by condemning us to outer darkness, where there is "weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth." In this way of viewing things, the Church is basically a courtroom, God is the presiding Judge, and our salvation depends on the degree to which we have accepted His commandments and conformed our lives to them. There is a "right way" and a "wrong way" to conduct ourselves; and not even God will help us if we choose the wrong way....

It's understandable that this kind of image should have taken on such major if distorted proportions. Many of us grow up in a rather authoritarian environment, where parents, school teachers and other influential figures lay down the law and expect us to obey it. If we don't, then we suffer the consequences. It's almost inevitable that we project this image, and its accompanying experiences, onto our relationship with God, imagining Him to be the ultimate authority figure, who holds in His hands absolute power to acquit us or to condemn us, to vindicate us or to relegate us to eternal damnation.

This image of God, of judgment and of the Church represents a total distortion of the Gospel message. It's a tragic parody of certain aspects of reality that conform more to human interactions than to our relations with the Holy Trinity. Certainly we shall be judged on the basis of our deeds and attitudes, as the apostle Paul declares and as Jesus makes clear in His parables and other teachings. But that judgment is not the action of a vindictive God, who wants us to conform to His will for His own sake, or who will damn us if we fail to obey. God's commandments are given to us for life, not for death and condemnation.

To the Eastern Church Fathers, the Church is not a courtroom; it is a hospital. The Body of Christ is a locus of healing, of renewal and reconciliation. Nor is God primarily a Judge. If He is depicted that



continued on page 4...

God's Law: Threat or Promise continued from pg 3.

way in Jesus' parables, it is to make the point that judgment is a reality. Yet we are judged not so much by God as by ourselves, by our own refusal to accept the "straight and narrow path" that leads through the darkness and corruption of this world and into the splendor and glory of the Kingdom.

Perhaps we can imagine it this way. In this earthly life, you and I are wandering, lost, in a vast forest, stumbling about, unsure of where we are and how to return home. In the midst of that forest God opens before us a pathway, narrow and difficult, which is the only one that leads out of the darkness and towards the light. The choice is ours. We can continue to stumble blindly, trying in vain to extricate ourselves. Or we can take the pathway He proposes, by conforming to His will, His commandments, that lead to life, hope and salvation.

This means that we need to re-think entirely our notion of God's Law and the meaning of the commandments He gave to Israel and, through Jesus Christ, to the Church. Unfortunately, we have no good translation for the Hebrew term Torah. Torah suggests "law," commandment, as in the Ten Commandments, which became developed and multiplied in Israel's experience so as to cover virtually every aspect of human conduct (the book of Leviticus, for example). Torah, however -- the "Law of God" -- signifies not so much "laws" or "rules and regulations" as it does "Life." Conformity to Torah, to God's will for our lives, actually works a transformation within us, to make us holy as God is holy. Ethicists have long known that we become virtuous by performing virtuous deeds: our actions change us so that we actually become what we do. So it is with Torah: to accept God's Law and to act upon it brings the grace of change into our life. It lifts us out of our error, our egotism, our anxieties, our rebellion, and sets us on that narrow pathway that leads to love, joy, peace and life: fruits of the Holy Spirit.

In Jesus Christ, the whole of Torah is summed up in a single word, a single concept: Love. The New Commandment Christ issues, therefore, takes the form of a call to love others with a self-giving

abandon that can lead even to death: "Greater love has no one than this, to lay down their life for their friends" (John 15:13). This is why the apostle's exhortation summons us to "Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, to the glory of God." To welcome one another is not just some moral obligation. It is a response of love, in the image of Christ who first loved us beyond all measure. Every act of obedience we can perform is predicated on this prior action of God on our behalf --

and this, because God Himself is Love. That love can include judgment; but its entire purpose is to lead us out of the death into which we have plunged ourselves, and to call us to a life whose every aspect serves "to the glory of God."

Like the notion of Torah or Law, the "glory of God" also needs to be clearly understood. God does not need us to glorify Him. If we are called to render Him "glory," it is for the same reason we are called to obey His commandments: so that something vital, essential, might be transformed within us. In a word, by glorifying God, we actually participate in His glory, in the life, the beauty, the splendor of His divinity. To do all things to the glory of God, there-

fore, is not so much for God's sake as it is for ours. By glorifying God, we enter into the sphere of His glory and share in it fully.

In the old Reformed Church catechism there is a statement that summarizes all of this very well. It's a statement that speaks of "man," used in the generic sense, referring to men and women, young and old. "The chief end of man -- of the human person -- is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." "To glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever." Insofar as we strive to glorify God by accepting the narrow way of conformity to His will, to His commandment of love, it becomes possible to welcome one another -- to receive, serve and love one another -- as Christ has welcomed us. This is how we truly glorify God. And by this very act we come to know that God leads us through this world, not for judgment and condemnation, but for life. We come to know in the depths of our being that our chief end, the only real purpose and meaning in our life, is to know God, to glorify Him, and to enjoy Him -- to rejoice in Him -- forever.

