



Healing on the Sabbath

CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF NOVEMBER 30, 2008

Please Remember in Prayer

Jane Koshutko (recovering with family in Baltimore, MD) Bill Parrish, Robert Evanusa, Olga Leisure, Valentina, Nina Gordon, Fr. Christian, Carol Boris, Constantina & Christos, Alicia & Susannah. If you have a prayer request, please let Fr. John know.

Turkeys for the Needy

Many thanks to those who contributed last Sunday to the purchase of turkeys for the need on Thanksgiving! \$100 was collected. May the Lord bless your kindness and care!

The Parish Council

will meet today following the Coffee Hour. As a reminder, all members of the parish are welcome to attend, but voting is reserved only for those who have been installed as Council members.

Vespers / Video and Molieben for Saint Nicholas

This Friday, December 5th, there will Vespers for St. Nicholas at 7:00pm, followed by a 30 minute video on the Saint's life. On Saturday, morning there will be a Molieben in honor of the Saint at 9:00am. Light refreshments will be served during the movie. The video will answer among other things:

- ❖ Why St. Nicholas is called the "Real Santa."
- ❖ What St. Nicholas did to be put in prison.
- ❖ Why St. Nicholas is the patron of travelers.
- ❖ How Saint Nicholas' relics ended up in Bari, Italy.
- ❖ Why St. Nicholas is known as the "Wonder-worker."



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30TH

24TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

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

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5TH

ST. SAVA THE SANCTIFIED

7:00p.m. Great Vespers
Video on St. Nicholas

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6TH

ST. NICHOLAS OF MYRA

9:00a.m. Molieben
6:00p.m. Great Vespers

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7TH

25TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

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

If you believe what you like in the gospels, and reject what you don't like, it is not the gospel you believe, but yourself.

St. Augustine

A Word About Scrip

Did you know that you could benefit the church by purchasing gift cards to almost any store? These gift cards make great "gifts" but also can be used to by groceries, gasoline, or other day-to-day things. Think about it – every time you go to the pump you could be helping your church without paying even a cent more for your gas. And of course, the same hold true for buying Christmas gifts! For more info, please see Jen Alexion or Kathy Parrish.

Next Choir Practice

Sunday, December 7th, following the Coffee Hour.

Scheduling Confession

Fr. John is available at just about any time to hear confessions: before or after services, classes, or movie nights; or at any other time by appointment.

Christmas Decorations

If you would like to make a donation for Christmas decorations, please see Susan Pappas, our treasurer, or earmark your check accordingly. Thank you!



READER SCHEDULE

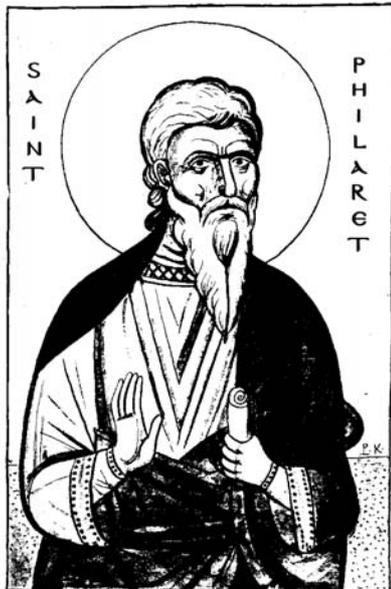
Sunday, Dec. 7th

Jen Alexion

Sunday, Dec. 14th

Kathy Parrish





SAINT PHILARET THE MERCIFUL

Commemorated on December 1st from the Prologue by St. Nikolai

Philaret was from the village of Amnia in Paphlagonia. Early in life, Philaret was a very wealthy man, but by distributing abundant alms to the poor he himself became extremely poor. However, he was not afraid of poverty, and, not heeding the complaints of his wife and children, he continued his charitable works with hope in God, Who said: Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy (Matthew 5:7). Once, while he was plowing in the field, a man came to him and complained that one of his oxen had died in the harness and that he was unable to plow with only one ox. Philaret then unharnessed one of his oxen and gave it to him. He even gave his remaining horse to a man who was summoned to go to war. He gave away the calf of his last cow, and when he saw how the cow pined for her missing calf, and the calf for the cow, he called the man and gave him the cow too. And thus the aged Philaret was left without food in an empty house. But he prayed to God and placed his hope in Him. And God did not abandon the righteous one to be put to

shame in his hope. At that time the Empress Irene reigned with her young son, Constantine. According to the custom of that time, the empress sent men throughout the whole empire to seek the best and most distinguished maiden to whom she could wed her son, the emperor. By God's providence, these men happened to stay overnight in Philaret's house, and they saw his most beautiful and modest granddaughter Maria, the daughter of his daughter Hypatia, and took her to Constantinople. The emperor was well pleased with her, married her, and moved Philaret and all his family to the capital, giving him great honors and riches. Philaret did not become proud as a result of this unexpected good fortune, but, thankful to God, he continued to perform good works even more than he had before, and thus he continued until his death. At the age of ninety he summoned his children, blessed them, and instructed them to cleave to God and to God's law, and with his clairvoyant spirit he prophesied to all of them how they would live out this life, as once had Jacob. After that he went to the Monastery of the Last Judgment and gave up his soul to God. At his death his face shone like the sun, and after his death an unusual, sweet fragrance came forth from his body and miracles took place at his relics. This righteous man entered into rest in the year 797. His wife, Theosevia, and all his children and grandchildren lived a God-pleasing life and reposed in the Lord.

More About St. Philaret

Virtue is like a thirst. When a man begins to drink of it, he becomes more thirsty and seeks to drink of it all the more. He who begins to exercise the virtue of compassion knows no measure and acknowledges no limit. St. Philaret was no less generous when he was impoverished than when he was wealthy. When his granddaughter became empress, he became a rich man once again, but no less generous. One day, he told his wife and children to prepare the best feast that they could and said: "Let us invite our King and Lord, with all His noblemen, to come to the feast." Everyone thought that the old man was thinking of inviting to dinner his son-in-law, the emperor, and they all worked as hard as they could and prepared the feast. Meanwhile, Philaret went around the streets and gathered all the needy, the beggars, the blind, the outcasts, the lame and the infirm, and brought them to the feast. Placing them at the table, he ordered his wife and sons to serve at the table. After the feast was completed, he put a gold coin in the hand of each guest and dismissed them. Then everyone understood that by "the King" he meant the Lord Christ Himself, and by "the noblemen" he meant beggars and those in need. He also said that one need not look at the money that one gives to beggars, but rather one should mix up the money in one's pocket and give only what the hand removes from the pocket. The hand will draw out whatever God's providence ordains.





RECOVERING AUTHENTIC SPIRITUALITY

From DirectionsToOrthodoxy.org / By John Kapsalis



In his classic book *Walden*, Henry Thoreau wrote: "our life is frittered away by detail." Sometimes I wonder if over the centuries we haven't spent too much time thinking, talking, reading and writing about God (this article included) and not enough experiencing God? It seems to me that we have cluttered our spirituality (whatever the word means anymore) with so much religious gobble-dygook that it too has become much like everything else in our lives: another burdensome chore, detached of any meaningful participation in the divine life. Or as the German historian and social philosopher, Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy aptly put it: "as soon as the Gospels were written, speech without experience began to dabble with the new facts proposed by the existence of the Church.... People tried to think the new life without being touched by it first in some form of call, listening, passion or change of heart." How sadly true this is.

Somewhere in our church history, we seemed to have forgotten the ancient refrain that "someone who has not seen God cannot speak of him." This type of authentic spirituality seems foreign to most of us. And yet when we read someone like the apostle Paul writing to the church in Rome, we get a picture of a lively and livable spirituality: "I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living a holy sacrifice-the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect" (Romans 12:1-2 NLT).

Transformation by the World

We've all been told time and again how the average Christian has become no different than the non-believer. We churn out the same profanities, show similar favoritism, watch the identical junk on our Plasma's, and waste ungodly amounts of money on ourselves, all the while complaining that life is generally unfair. We talk about the love of God, but really have no time to love Him or anyone else for that matter. Even that desperately longed-for of Christian gifts, "peace," has become so elusive that any peace we might actually get our

hands on is of the self-help kind-the kind that has the same shelf life as a dollar store gadget. Truth is, we've become so self-absorbed and selfish we wouldn't notice the four horsemen of the apocalypse galloping down our street!

So what have we done wrong? Plenty, I'm sure. But I think the biggest culprit for the malaise we're in is that we've become "armchair Christians." Isn't that what we do with our sports and politics? We want to share the glory of a great sports play, but are too lazy to get out there and even play with a group of friends. Or we're quick to criticize every politician ever elected, but you'd be hard pressed to find anyone actually ready to join a cause to make a real difference. Of course, the excuses have all been heard before: "no one can change anything...everything is corrupt ... too busy... no money ... blah, blah, blah."



It seems to me our Christianity is no different. Domesticated. Safe. Boring really. Of course, we've held on to all the forms of religion-going to liturgy for an hour, making sure we kiss all the icons and dressing up for Jesus. But what about taking risks spreading the gospel to people outside our ethnic ghettos? What about spending our time and money bringing the Kingdom of God to the starving, abused and suffering mass of humanity? And what about lighting a fire in all those who have been baptized in Christ, but put away Christ long ago? In the revealing survey-based study on *The Orthodox Church Today* published by the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute, only a quarter of the respondents believed that "practical care of parishioners for one another" was important while an appalling six percent valued evangelism: all just enough I think to rightly earn us the wrath of God! How can there possibly be any spirituality apart from living with others and for others?

Transformation by the Renewal of Your Mind

When St Paul wrote about being transformed by the renewal of your mind, he meant more than not conforming to a set of immoral behaviors; he meant more than not conforming to the world; and he definitely meant more than just putting on a humble face before entering a church. After all, even many who are not Christian do as much.

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The word "transform" that Paul uses is the same word that is used only once in all the gospels to describe the transformation or transfiguration of Christ: "there he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light" (Matthew 17:2 NIV). So what St Paul is saying is that something like Christ's transformation has to happen to us as well. There has to be not just an external change, but a reversal of who we are inside to the degree that, we too like Moses, shine like the sun in the kingdom of our God. In other words, it is an internal transfiguration that makes us hunger for God's presence so much that we not only find ourselves crucified to the world but also doing the will of God.

So what does a transformed life look like? For one thing, it is freedom. In Galatians 5:1 we read "it is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then and do not let yourselves be burdened again with a yoke of slavery" (NIV). The apostle Paul constantly drove the message in his letters that rules of doing good and living right no longer bind Christians. Rather, the transformed Christian desires and loves to do what he ought to do. That is what makes us free. Having a mind that wants to be with God so badly that we live in a way that is always pleasing to Him.

The transformed life is also one that is wholly dependent on the Holy Spirit to renew and change it. We can't do it on our own. And the Holy Spirit does this by allowing the repentant Christian to ever-increasingly gaze on the glory of God...

A New Spirituality

It is God who transforms lives, and transformed lives look like St Maria of Skobtsova who described it all so well: "*The sign of those who have reached perfection is this: if ten times a day they are given over to be burned for the love of their neighbor, they will not be satisfied with that.... God gave His Son over to death on the cross out of love for His creature. And if He had something more precious, He would have given it to us, in order thereby to gain humankind. Imitating this ...[everyone should] long to be like God in perfect love for their neighbor.*" Spirituality is not reserved for those navel-gazing and cloistered away alone. Spirituality of the kind described in the New Testament is renewing. Transfiguring. And it is a transformation that comes from a dirt-under-your-nails spirituality that comes from seeing God, not on the mountaintop but in the face of the man sleeping under the trash. This is where we will find God unveiled-face-to-face reflecting His glory in us.

***St Catherine the Great Martyr Orthodox Church
Hagerstown MD
Presents***

**GROWING A BEAUTIFUL ORTHODOX PARISH
A Nativity Season Retreat
Saturday 13, December 2008; 9AM – 5PM**

Speakers

*Rev. Jonathan Ivanoff, Rector, St John the Theologian, Shirley NY; Secretary for the Department of Evangelization, OCA
Joseph Kormos, Christ the Savior/Holy Spirit Church, Cincinnati OH; Parish Health Leader, Diocese of the Midwest*

Schedule

- 9:00 Divine Liturgy -- singers welcome
- 10:30 Continental Breakfast
- 11:00 Session I
- 1:00 Lenten Lunch
- 2:00 Session II
- 4:00 Wrap up and Q&A
- 5:00 Vespers

If you plan to attend, please RSVP Gene Aleshin at 301-824-2172 or (preferably) email junegene58@aol.com. In any case, leave name(s), phone number or e-mail address, and Parish. A voluntary contribution of \$10.00 is suggested to defray costs.

DECEMBER CONGRATULATIONS!

Birthdays:

- 12/4 Carole Boris
Karen Nichols
- 12/6 Gabriela Vlahovici
- 12/29 Fr. Daniel Hubiak

Namesdays:

- 12/4 St. Alexander Hotovitsky
Alexander Parsells
- 12/5 St. Sava the Sanctified
Sava Cook
- 12/6 St. Nicholas
Nicholas Evanusa
- 12/17 Prophet Daniel
Fr. Daniel Hubiak
St. Jacob the Patriarch
Jacob McFarland
St. Deborah
Deborah Royal
- 12/24 St. Eugenia
Jane Koshutko
- 12/27 St. Stephen
Bill Parrish