



CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF MAY 3, 2009

Please Remember in Prayer

Carole Boris (newly-departed), Archpriest Michael, Monk Christian, Nadia, Kathy & Bill Parrish, Diane Evanusa, Marie, Thomas, Judith Kocinski, Jane Koshutko, Robert Evanusa, Nicholas & Linda, Nicholas, Anna, Yvonne, Katherine, Michael, Gregory, Todd & Olga Leisure, Nina Gordon, Constantina & Christos. Requests? Let Fr. John know.

The Parish Council

will meet today, Sunday, May 3rd, following the Coffee Hour. As always, all members of the parish are invited to attend though voting privileges are reserved for those blessed to serve.

SUNDAY, MAY 3RD

MYRRHBEARING WOMEN

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

MONDAY, MAY 4TH

7:00p.m. Orthodox Movie Night

THURSDAY, MAY 7TH

ST. ALEXIS OF WILKES-BARRE

9:00a.m. Akathist

SATURDAY, MAY 9TH

6:00p.m. Great Vespers

SUNDAY, MAY 10TH

SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC

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



Orthodox Movie Night – Monday, May 4th

Next week's movie will be "Chariots of Fire" This film (runtime 123 minutes) will be shown on Monday, May 4th at 7pm at the church. All invited!

Reading Group – Monday, May 11th

The next Reading Group will meet on Monday, May 11th at 7pm at the church. The text is "The Essence of Christianity" by Bishop Alexander (Mileant). Copies are available for pickup at the candle stand. All are encouraged to take the reading and attend the group for discussion.



Church Readers Sought

If you would like to help read the Hours and Epistles, please let Fr. John know. Learning to chant is easy, just takes a little practice.



The Final Enemy to be Defeated

With Pascha, Christ has defeated the most fearful things to mankind: sin, death, and the devil. Yet, the Lord left one of the most fearful things to human beings still left to be defeated; and He did this so that we might have a chance to share in His victory. That final last enemy is the fear of change – the fear of full and complete surrender to God. Fallen man, in a most paradoxical fashion fears his own return to God, he fears being healed, he fears giving up his passions, he fears becoming truly holy. This is because as creatures of habit it is hard to give up what we are used to. Yet if we choose to accept change – fully and perfectly – then we will experience the true Pascha, the Passover from death to life. The Lord asks, "Are you ready to 'pass over' with Me? Then place your trust in Me."



On God's Intervention

Many times divine Providence intervenes in our matters, to make us correct ourselves.

St. Basil the Great

READER SCHEDULE

Sunday, May 10th

Kathy Parrish

Sunday, May 17th

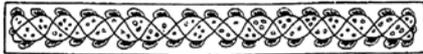
Troy Duker



Pilgrimage to St. Tikhon's Monastery – Monday, May 25th

Each year on Memorial Day a Pilgrimage is made to St. Tikhon's Orthodox Monastery in South Canaan, PA. This year, Fr. John and his family will be going. If you are interested in the pilgrimage too, please let Fr. John know by Sunday, May 10th at the latest, as there is a possibility for a bus with another Orthodox parish.





SYMBOLS OF THE RESURRECTION

From Orthodox America



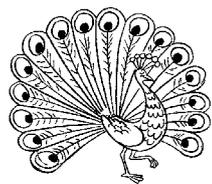
Symbols are an important part of our faith and are very evident within our churches. The icons; the altar, the icon-screen, the candles, and even the vestments of our priests are all symbols of various types. Each holds a meaning that must be understood if the symbol is to touch our lives with more than its mere external appearance.

An ordinary egg, for example, is a symbol of the Resurrection of our Lord. On the Feast of Pascha, we bless baskets of food containing, among other things, eggs. Just as the egg appears to be lifeless, so too did the body of Christ appear to be a mere corpse. But just as the egg can contain life, so does Christ contain the life we receive through His Resurrection! This is the meaning for using the egg as a symbol of Resurrection.



Another common symbol of the Resurrection is the lily. It blossoms from a dry and lifeless-looking bulb into one of the most beautiful flowers of God's creation. Jesus Himself speaks of the lily in His Sermon on the Mount when He says that "not even Solomon, in all of his splendor, was attired like one of these." This is the beauty from lifelessness that no king on earth could ever hope to match.

An ancient bird from Greek mythology, the phoenix, has been incorporated as a symbolic form of the Resurrection in many Orthodox churches. Mythology describes how the bird fell to earth and burned, and yet from its ashes arose another bird. Christ's life in an earthly form was destroyed through the Crucifixion, but a new and more glorious life came about as a result of His Resurrection. The idea of resurrection, in analogy to the tale of the phoenix, is depicted visually in icons showing an eagle rising out of a flame.



The peacock is a symbol of antiquity often found upon the walls of the ancient catacombs of the early Church. The bird was used as a symbol because the peacock has an unusually beautiful tail. Each year, however, the bird loses its beauty during the molting season to such an extent that the apparent intrinsic worth of the bird is greatly diminished. Yet the value of the bird is enhanced as the molting season comes to an end and a new and more beautiful tail appears. In the eyes of men, the mystery, the awe, the greatness of Christ is enhanced countless times over through the Resurrection.

An even more common and certainly much more familiar example of the Resurrection is the existence of the Orthodox Church itself. The community of the faithful would not exist at all had it not been for the miracle of the Resurrection. Thus the Church, the peacock; the phoenix bird, the lily and the egg are all reminders of the greatest event in history. We should seek to grow in awareness and appreciation of this event, being reminded of it again and again through the use of the symbol, a means of communication and understanding.



WITNESSES OF THE RESURRECTION

Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow

The Apostles call themselves 'witnesses of the resurrection' of Christ, though their ministry was to bear witness not of His resurrection alone, but also of all of His teaching. So important do they deem the truth of the resurrection to be. And indeed as soon as this truth is confirmed, so soon is also confirmed thereby the truth of all that which our Lord did and taught. But inasmuch as the truth of Christ's resurrection is important to faith, the truth of our resurrection is important to our life. When this truth is confirmed, all the rules of a holy and godly life become firmly established in us.

SAINT ALEXIS OF WILKES-BARRE

Saint Alexis (Toth) was born in Austro-Hungary on March 18, 1854, to a poor Carpatho-Russian family. He was married and they had a child. He was ordained to the priesthood in the Uniate (Eastern Rite Catholic) Church on April 18, 1878. His wife and child died shortly after that, while he was serving as a parish priest. In October 1889, Alexis was appointed as priest of a Uniate parish in Minneapolis, Minnesota. When he presented his credentials to the American Catholic archbishop, he was treated with open hostility. He knew his rights under canon law, so he convened a meeting of eight of the ten Unia priests in America at Wilkes-Barre who petitioned the bishops of Eastern Europe to aid them, but they would not. He feared deportation and told his congregation that he should just return to Europe. They said "No". They had been under foreign domination long enough. They told Father Alexis to go to the Russian Orthodox bishop for help. Bishop Vladimir came to Minneapolis and on March 25, 1891, received Father Toth and 361 parishioners into the Orthodox Church of their ancestors. The parishioners regarded this event as a new Triumph of Orthodoxy, crying out with joy: "Glory to God for His great mercy!" That is St. Mary's OCA. The Saint went on to form or lead back to Orthodoxy 16 additional communities. He traveled to southern New Jersey to try to regain his health in late 1908. Then he returned to Wilkes-Barre where he was confined to bed for his last months. He reposed on Friday, May 7, 1909. His relics were laid to rest at St. Tikhon's Monastery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania. His tablet reads: "This is your Faith. Hold to it."



DIRECTORY UPDATES

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MAY CONGRATULATIONS!

Anniversaries:

5/6 Stanley & Jennifer Alexion
5/12 Donna Anderson

Birthdays:

5/26 Elisabeth Parsells
5/29 Irene Clenney
5/30 J. Michael McFarland

Namesdays:

5/5 *St. Irene the Great Martyr*
Irene Clenney
5/8 *St. Emilia*
Mat. Emily Parsells
Jodi McElwee
5/11 *Third Sunday of Pascha*
Diane Evanusa
Susan Pappas
5/18 *Fourth Sunday of Pascha*
Fr. Christian (Lesinsky)
5/21 *St. Helen*
Ellen Gunderson
5/23 *St. Alexander Nevsky*
Alexander Royal
Robert Dodge

Mistakes? Omissions? Please see Fr. John.

ON CHARITY

The bread you do not use is the bread of the hungry. The garment hanging in your wardrobe is the garment of the person who is naked. The shoes you do not wear are the shoes of the one who is barefoot. The money you keep locked away is the money of the poor. The acts of charity you do not perform are the injustices you commit...

Yet, at the same time, God considers Himself constantly obligated to repay you for whatever charities you do to your fellow men.



St. Basil the Great



ON THE STATE OF THE SOUL AFTER DEATH

"God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." – Matthew 22:32



The state in which the soul finds itself from its departure from the body in biological death to its reunion with the body at the Second Coming of the Lord is called the intermediate or middle state. This condition, brought upon by death, is not natural to man as it temporarily disrupts his unity of body and soul. However, it was permitted by God so that sin would not reign forever and so that man's body could be created anew in a spiritualized fashion in the Age to come.

During this time, the souls of the departed do not wander the earth but instead immediately enter into either Paradise or Hades, where they experience a foretaste of Heaven or Hell. Neither Paradise nor Hades should not be thought of as a physical place since they are experienced without the body, instead we should understand them as spiritual states of being which reflect one's relationship to God.

In Paradise, the righteous live a comfortable and free life, with God and His angels, in eager expectation of their future glory when they are reunited with their bodies. Here they live in communion with each other constantly praising the Lord. And since neither the personality nor the memory is destroyed by death, the souls of the righteous are able to recognize and communicate with each other. St. Simeon the New Theologian writes,

"even those who never knew each other in the flesh in this world will know each other there, for as it is impossible for the Father not to recognize the Son or the Son the Father, likewise the saints too, when they have become gods by grace, by having God indwelling within them, will be able to recognize each other ..."

While, on the other hand, in Hades the unrepentant sinners live in grief and affliction, like those already condemned who await the judge's final decision. Those in Hades are unable to recognize each other. This is not because their personhood or memory was destroyed by death, but because they chose to live without harmony and loving

communion with God and their fellow man. St. Macarius the Great writes figuratively that those in this terrible place cannot even look one another in the face because "the back of one is attached to the back of another."

Therefore the souls in the intermediate state not only live in a state of conscious expectation of their final sentence at the Dread Judgment but they also already partake in part of the joys of Heaven and the torments of Hell. In this sense Paradise and Hades are considered the antechambers of Heaven and Hell respectively, since in them souls experience a foretaste of the Age to come. Those in Paradise partake in part of the joys of Heaven

and those in Hades partake in part of the sufferings of Hell. This experience is partial or incomplete because reunion with the body has not yet taken place.

St. John Chrysostom teaches that until the general resurrection the righteous souls in Paradise will re-main "uncrowned" because the

crowning of the soul must take place together with the body. Here he cites St. Paul, who in Hebrews, writes that the righteous of the Old Testament, even though they had received a good report through faith, had not yet received the promise, and would not be made perfect apart from us.

In Revelation, St. John the Theologian writes that those souls who had been slain for the Word of God and for the witness they had borne cry out to the Lord for their blood to be avenged. But the Lord gave them white robes and told them to rest a little longer, until the number of their servants and their brethren should be complete.

Thus the middle or intermediate state is one of expectancy and anticipation for the righteous in Paradise, but one of fear and trembling for the unrepentant in Hades.

