



CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF NOVEMBER 12, 2006



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12TH 22ND SUNDAY OF PENTECOST

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

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14TH APOSTLE PHILIP / SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS

7:00p.m. Compline; Confessions

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15TH BEGINNING OF THE NATIVITY FAST

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16TH APOSTLE MATTHEW

7:00p.m. Compline; Confessions

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18TH 6:00p.m. Vespers; Confessions

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19TH 23RD SUNDAY OF PENTECOST

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

Confessions also heard by appointment.

The Nativity Fast

begins November 15th and ends December 25th with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. As a reminder every Orthodox Christian who wishes to partake of Holy Communion on the feast of Christmas and thereafter must avail themselves of the Sacrament of Confession during the Nativity Fast. Confessions can be heard following any service or by appointment. In addition to a thorough examination of our conscience and a good, frank, and open confession of sins, we should strive to prepare ourselves to celebrate Christmas by keeping the fast, increasing our prayer life, reading a spiritual book, and becoming more generous in our almsgiving.

2007 Orthodox Wall Calendars / Pocket Planners

from Saint Tikhon's Bookstore are now available for order. To reserve a calendar or pocket planner please sign your name to the list in the back of the church. The total costs of the calendars and pocket planners, including shipping, are \$3.00 and \$2.00 respectively.



The Parish Website

has the updated schedule of services through January 2007 as well as many photos from the Harvest Ball. Check it out!



OUR HOLY FATHER NILUS OF SINAI

From the Prologue by Saint Nikolai of Zicha

He was at first a prefect in the capital, Constantinople. A married man, he had a son and a daughter. Seeing the vice-ridden life of the capital, he and his wife agreed to withdraw from the world. This they did. His wife and daughter went to a women's monastery in Egypt, and Nilus and his son Theodulus went to Mount Sinai, writing beautiful books on the spiritual life. He entered peacefully into rest in about 450 AD, at the age of eighty, and went to the blessed life of heaven. These holy words are his: "Physical passions have their origin in physical desires, and against them, restraint is necessary; but spiritual passions originate in spiritual desires, and against them prayer is required." St. Nilus is commemorated on November 12th.

ASK FATHER: 3 QUESTIONS / 3 ANSWERS

Q. Father, I've never fasted before, well at least not for a whole fasting season. And I'm afraid to start because the fasting guidelines in last week's bulletin look to be just too difficult for me. What should I do?

A. Your question is an excellent one, particularly because you see not just the need to fast but also the need to find a profitable level of abstinence – one that is not too difficult nor too easy.

As with anything else one has never done before, one should start slow and then make a gradual increase. This may mean abstaining just from meat for the period of the fast, and then next fast abstaining from meat and dairy products. But whatever level of abstinence you choose (and it is advisable to consult with your priest when doing so) should be carried out through the entire fasting period, not just on particular days of the week.

Q. How is fasting different from abstinence?

Fasting, strictly speaking, means a totally going without food and drink for a certain short period of time, usually until a particular time of day (say noon, 3pm, or sundown) or for the whole day (such as on Great and Holy Friday). This type of fast is kept when preparing for Holy Communion, as physical hunger helps to cultivate the spiritual expectation of receiving the Body and Blood of Christ.

While abstinence, on the other hand, means refraining from certain types of foods (such as meat, dairy, fish, wine or oil) and reducing our portions so that we leave the table before we are completely satisfied. This type of fast is kept over a long period of time, as during the four fasting seasons, and throughout the year on Wednesdays and Fridays. The aim of abstinence is to slowly and deliberately starve the passions so that man's spirit can break free and return to God. For this type of fasting to be effective, it must be undertaken with patience and unbroken continuity. As Fr. Alexander Schmemmann explains, "The time factor is essential for it takes time to uproot and to heal the common and universal disease which men have come to consider as their 'normal' state", that is it takes time for man to realize that he is not meant to live on bread alone but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God.

Q. Fasting is great in theory but it seems practically impossible. What kinds of food can I prepare without meat or dairy products?

In today's consumer market there are many ways to keep the fast without having to resort to a bread and water diet. The following two resources should help: the cookbook, "When You Fast... Recipes for Lenten Seasons" by Catherine Mandell, and vegan-food.net, a website with hundreds of Lenten recipes.

ON FASTING

Fr. Thomas Hopko

Orthodox Christians believe that their spiritual lives start with their stomachs. They believe that when peoples' eating is right their spirits can be more open to God and more attentive to all that is good, true, and beautiful in life. When, on the contrary, peoples' eating is wrong, their minds are disordered; their emotions are rebellious; and their flesh rules their being and behavior in harmful ways.

Right eating means to eat the right foods in the right amounts at the right times in the right ways for the right reasons. People who eat properly prepare and partake of their meals with discipline and dignity, free from emotional drives and carnal desires. They do this to serve God, their fellow creatures, and their own well-being more effectively, fruitfully, and joyfully.

The Church provides guidelines for healthy eating and sane fasting. The Lord Jesus Christ is the first and final Teacher on the subject, as He is on all others.

Christ and His apostles feasted and fasted. They affirmed that God gives all foods to be enjoyed with thanksgiving (Act 10:10-15; Rom 14:6). They also warned that eating can become idolatrous. St. Paul, for example, speaks of "persons (who) do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own belly" (Rom 16:18). "Their end," he says, "is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things" (Phil 3:19).

The Scriptures and the Saints teach that in eating and fasting, moderation is the rule for it leads to freedom from the carnal passions: lust, greed, anger, sadness, sloth, and despondency. While excesses of any kind are harmful and destructive, leading to either to gluttony and drunkenness, or to pride, vainglory, ungodly zeal, condemnation of others, and spiritual delusion.



A HOMILY ON HEALING

by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

Time after time we hear accounts in the Gospels about people who were healed from illnesses. And in the Gospels this appears so simple and clear: there is a need, and God responds to it. So the question arises: Why then does this not happen with all of us? Each of us needs physical healing, or healing of the soul; but only a few are healed. Why is this?

When we read the Gospels, we lose sight of the fact that Christ did not heal each and every person. One person in a crowd would be healed; but many others, also ailing in body or soul, were not healed. And this happens because — in order to receive the action of the grace of God unto healing of body or soul, or of both — we must open ourselves to God. Not to healing, but to God.

We often would like to eliminate sickness from our lives, not only because it makes life more difficult; not only because sickness goes hand-in-hand with pain; but also, or even most importantly, because sickness reminds us of our frailty. It is as if it says to us: "Don't forget! You are mortal." Your body is now saying to you: "You do not have power to restore me to health. You cannot do anything. I could die, fade away, deteriorate, wither away — and that would be the end of your earthly life." Isn't this the main reason why we struggle with all our strength to recover, and why we want to obtain health for ourselves?

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And so, if coming from these preconditions we ask God to heal us, to restore us to a state of wholeness, this means that we are asking only to forget; we are asking so that we may forget about our mortality instead of using it as a reminder to us, a wake-up call, so that we would realize that the days are passing by, that the time is short, and that if we want to attain the full stature to which we are called on earth, we must hurry to shake off from ourselves everything which is fatal to us. For sickness and death have not only outer causes. We carry within us the sins of remembrance of wrongs, and bitterness, and hate, and greed, and so many other things which kill the life of the spirit in us and do not allow us to live — now, in the present time — the eternal life, which is simply life in the full meaning of the word, life in its fullness.

What then do we do? We must ask ourselves some

serious questions; and when we come to God, asking Him to heal us, we must prepare ourselves beforehand for healing. To be healed does not mean to become whole only in order to go back to the same kind of life that we lived before; it means to be whole in order to begin a new life, as if we realized that we died in the healing action of God; that the illness was of the old man in us—that is, the corruptible body which the Apostle Paul speaks about. This old man must die in order for the new man to live. We must be ready to become this new man through the death of the old in order to begin to live anew: like Lazarus, who was called out of the tomb not simply to go back to his previous life but in order that, having lived through something which cannot be described by any human words, he might re-enter into life with new foundations.

Are we capable of receiving healing? Are we ready? Do we agree to take upon ourselves the responsibility of a new wholeness, in order to enter again, and yet again, into the world in which we live, with knowledge of our renewal; to be light, to be salt, to be joy, to be hope, to be love, to be giving back to God and man?

We must begin to think about this, because we are all sick, in one way or another. We are all frail; we are all weak. None of us is capable of living fully, even in this life which is given to us on earth! We must think about this and begin to become able to open ourselves to God in such a way that He can work His miracle of healing, and make us new; but also so that we may bear this newness, which is truly the renewal of God to the world in which we live. Amen.





THE JESUS PRAYER AND THE 3 POWERS OF THE SOUL

Adapted from Metropolitan Hierotheos

Man according to Scripture, has been created "after the image of God" (Col. 3:10). God is Trinity, that is, one essence in three Persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). Thus the soul, being created in the image of God, is single as well as manifold.

The soul has three parts that must be united and turned toward God. The three parts or powers of the soul are the power to know, the power to love, and the power to will. According to the Fathers, the soul was created 1) to know God, 2) to love God, and 3) to do the will of God.

In this way the commandment is fulfilled: "and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mt. 12:30). When the mind remains in God through prayer and contemplation, it kindles within the soul a strong desire and love for God, which in turn strengthens man's will to keep the Commandments. In this way the soul is itself united, and is joined to God.

However, when the mind comes to ignore God, then the soul begins to desire and love created things instead of the Creator, and the will of man becomes subject to the tyranny of the passions. In this way the soul becomes first disunited and then eventually separated from God.

Through sin, the three powers of the soul go away from God and lose unity with one another. One part of the soul, usually the mind, may want to return to God, but the other parts may not wish to. This is the state of most Christians.

Nevertheless, the unity of the soul can still be restored through the Jesus Prayer. The return to God starts with the concentration of the mind. Our aim is to detach the mind from its attraction to the surrounding objects and bring it back to God.

Since the mind has the property of increasing love and desire for that which it is concentrated on, concentration on the Name of God leads to love from Him. However, in the same way, concentration on the things of the flesh or the world lead to love from them.

Therefore, let each man attend to his thoughts, for they will lead either to his unification with God or to his spiritual fragmentation – to eternal life or to eternal torment.



GUARDING THE MIND AND THE HEART

Saint Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain

Everyone finds calm and rest at their center. As snails find rest within their crusty shell, as octopus in their chambers, as four-footed land animals in their dens, and as birds in their nests, so also with man, whose mind has the natural attribute to be calm, to find rest and to be in peace when it enters the heart and the inner man. Man too has the body as a region and dwelling, and the heart as its own center and room for resting. St. Isaac called the heart "the house of understanding." And as the animals when troubled and frightened run to their dens to be protected, so also the mind of man, when troubled by some assault of evil thoughts or some other internal or external circumstance, runs to the heart and shouts, "My Jesus help me! My Jesus save me!" and is thus liberated. St. John Climacus said: "The name of Jesus chastises enemies" and "Let the memory of Jesus be united with your breathing and then you will know the benefit of silence." The Apostle Peter preached: "And there is salvation in no one else [except Jesus], for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). This is why St. Macarios also noted: "For as it is not possible for the eye to see without light and for speech to be made without a tongue, or for hearing to take place without an ear, so also it is not possible without Christ to be saved and to enter the kingdom of heaven."

