



CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF JULY 27, 2008

Please Remember in Prayer

Fr. Christian, who is recovering from surgery, Carol Boris, Nina Gordon, Constantina, and Christos. Requests? Let Fr. John know.

Parish Council Members

are asked to please stay briefly today to schedule our next meeting.



Saint George's Greek Festival – Today

Today is the final day of the Greek Festival being held at the Ocean City Convention Center. Fr. John and his family will be going to the festival after coffee hour. If you're interested in going too, and want to head over together just let him or Matushka Emily know. Let's try to support our Orthodox brothers and sisters at St. George's.

SUNDAY, JULY 27TH

6TH SUNDAY OF PENTECOST

GREAT-MARTYR PANTELEIMON

8:40a.m. Hours

9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy

Coffee Hour

MONDAY, JULY 28TH

7:00p.m. Orthodox Movie Night

FRIDAY, AUGUST 1ST

PROCESSION OF HOLY CROSS

9:00a.m. Akathist

SATURDAY, AUGUST 2ND

6:00p.m. Great Vespers

SUNDAY, AUGUST 3RD

7TH SUNDAY OF PENTECOST

8:40a.m. Hours

9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy

Coffee Hour

The supreme physical expression of prayer is the act of using our hands to reach out to the hungry with a piece of bread, to the thirsty with a cup of cold water, to the refugee with hospitality.

St. Isaac the Syrian

READER SCHEDULE

Sunday, August 3rd

Kathy Parrish

Sunday, August 10th

Jody McElwee



Saint Elisabeth Convent – Belarus

On Friday, August 15th, the feast of Dormition, we will have a visitor to our parish from St. Elisabeth the New Martyr's Convent in Minsk, Belarus. Sister Irina will tell us about the Convent, show a DVD and offer things for sale which were made by the Sisters. For more information regarding her visit, please see the handout in the back of the church.

Looking Ahead – 3 Great Feasts in August

In the month of August we celebrate three Great Feasts: Transfiguration of the Lord (8/6), Dormition of the Theotokos (8/15), and Our Parish Feast – The Icon Not-Made-By-Hands (8/16). Please note these days and make a special effort to attend the Services.

Blessing of Automobiles

If you missed the Blessing of Automobiles last Sunday and would still like to have your vehicle blessed, please see Fr. John.

Special Parish Meeting – September 21st

At the Parish Meeting on Jan. 21, 2007, the Finance Committee was commissioned to conduct a feasibility investigation regarding the purchase of land for future parish use. On Sunday, Sept. 21st, there will be a Special Parish Meeting to hear the results of this investigation.





FROM THE DESERT FATHERS

On Forgiveness

A brother who was insulted by another brother came to Abba Sisoës, and said to him: "I was hurt by my brother, and I want to avenge myself". Abba tried to console him and said: "Don't do that, my child. Rather leave vengeance to God". But he said: "I will not quit until I avenge myself". Then Abba said: "Let us pray, brother; and standing up, he said: "Our Father... forgive us our trespasses as we forgive NOT those who trespass against us..." Hearing these words, the brother fell at the feet of the Abba and said: "I am not going to fight with my brother any more. Forgive me, Abba."



On Encounter with Holiness

Three Fathers used to go and visit Blessed Anthony every year and two of them used to discuss their thoughts and the salvation of their souls with him, but the third always remained silent and did not ask him anything. After a long time, Abba Anthony said to him, 'You often come here, but you never ask me anything,' and the other replied, 'It is enough for me to see you, Father.'



On Acquisition of Virtue

Abba Anthony said, "Whoever hammers a lump of iron, first decides what he is going to make of it, a scythe, a sword, or an axe. Even so we ought to make up our minds what kind of virtue we want to forge, or else we labor in vain."



On God's Will

When Abba Anthony thought about the depth of the judgments of God, he asked, "Lord, how is it that some die when they are young, while others drag on to extreme old age? Why are there those who are poor and those who are rich? Why do wicked men prosper and why are the just in need?" He heard a voice answering him, "Anthony, keep your attention on yourself; these things are according to the judgment of God, and it is not to your advantage to know anything about them.'

GREAT-MARTYR AND HEALER PANTELEIMON

Commemorated July 27th

Panteleimon was born in Nicomedia of a Christian mother and a pagan father. His mother was called Eubula and his father Eustorgius. As a young man he studied the science of medicine. The priest, Hermolaus, invited Panteleimon to be with him and taught him the Faith of Christ and baptized him. Panteleimon miraculously cured a blind man whom the other doctors treated in vain; he cured him by the power of Christ and baptized him. Out of envy the doctors accused Panteleimon of being a Christian and he went before the Emperor Maximian to stand trial. "He stood before the earthly king in body but in thought he stood before the heavenly King." Before the emperor, he freely declared that he was a Christian and, before the eyes of the emperor, he healed a paralytic of a long-standing illness. This miracle drew many pagans to the Faith of Christ. The emperor subjected him to torture but the Lord appeared to him on several occasions and delivered him whole and unharmed. Saint Hermolaus with Hermippas and Thermocrates were then martyred. Sentenced to death, Saint Panteleimon knelt for prayer. At that moment the executioner struck him on the neck with a sword and the sword broke as though it were made of wax. The executioner was unable to execute him until the saint completed his prayer and until Panteleimon told him to behead him. His relics possessed the ability to heal. Panteleimon was executed under an olive tree which, after that, became all adorned with fruit. PANTA LEON means, "all merciful" "all compassionate." The All-merciful God received his righteous soul and glorified him among His great saints. This wonderful martyr suffered honorably for Christ in his youth, on July 27, 304 A.D. Saint Panteleimon is invoked in prayers at the time of the "Blessing of Waters" and in the blessing of the holy oils used in the "The Sacrament of Holy Unction," together with Saint Hermolaus and the other unmercenary saints and wonder-workers. A most beautiful church dedicated to this saint is located on Holy Mount Athos.



From the Prologue of Ochrid



THE HIDDEN KINGDOM

By VRev. Vladimir Berzonsky



"The kingdom of God does not come visibly, nor will people say, 'Here is it,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:20)

Finding that kingdom is the whole purpose and meaning of life. Nothing else matters, yet so many unfortunate humans live and die not only never discovering that hidden realm, but not even knowing that it exists. Nathaniel may have been thinking about it when Jesus told him that He knew what was in the mind of Philip's friend. (Jn 1:45-49)

"How do you know me?" Nathaniel asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you" (John 1:48). Not only did Jesus see the future apostle, He perceived what was going on in his soul. That's why Nathaniel, like other disciples, dropped everything they lived for in order to follow the Lord Jesus. What brought Zacchaeus down from the sycamore tree? Why did Matthew abandon his tax collection responsibilities to give his life to Christ?

For the same reason that women and men flee from society and spend all their lives in monasteries: It's understood by those who accept the Lord's invitation, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you" (John 15:16). All who enter seminaries have invited Jesus Christ to gain admission into their hearts.

How liberating it is to be guided by the Holy Spirit into an ever new increasing awareness of the life of service to the Holy Trinity.

The poet Rainer Marie Rilke realized it:

"And then the knowledge comes to me that I have space within me. For a second, timeless larger life."

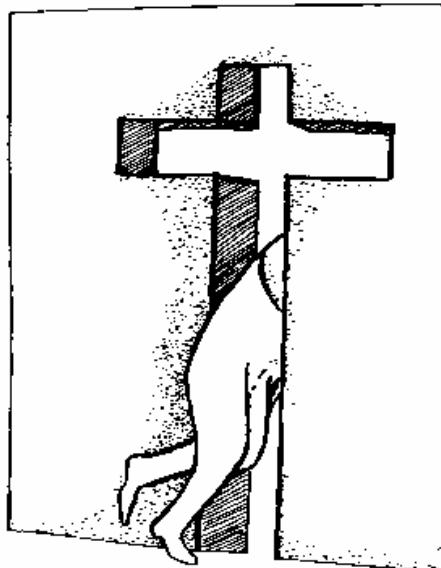
What a precious insight. But it's not space within. Space suggests a vacuum or emptiness. Jesus tells us that it's where we may discover His Father's kingdom. Such a realm bursts with energy and an abundance of life like nothing comparable in this lifetime. Recall the pride that the apostles had upon looking across from the Mount of Olives at

the glistening stones of the temple in Jerusalem (Luke 21:5), and Jesus in effect telling them that the temple could and would disappear in a generation from that time; but the kingdom of God was elsewhere. One must cultivate the precious soul within each of us. It's done by prayer, meditation and worship.

The spiritual adventure requires an ongoing surrender to the will of God and the constant conflict between the old Adam rebelling, criticizing and refuting that blessed endeavor, and the breath of the Spirit encouraging the newborn child of the heavenly Father to keep on affirming the decision to abandon self-will and confirm the commitment to Christ. His yoke is easy, but it is a harness. It never imprisons. Always one has the opportunity to abandon the narrow path to salvation and choose the allure of a society screaming for attention and promoting sinfulness, self-indulgence and instantaneous gratification of the senses.

The rewards for staying in touch with the inner person serving Christ's purpose are beyond all comprehension. We were created with the potential for discovering God through self-discovery,

and to realize self-discovery can only come about through self-mastery and then self-abandonment for the purpose of giving ourselves to Jesus. Read the Sermon on the Mount with that program in mind, and you will understand why the Beatitudes, seeming so contradictory, make sound spiritual sense. Why are the poor, the peacemakers, the humble [meek], even the mourners blessed? It's because they have no more props to support the fallacy that salvation and God's kingdom can be found in the mundane world and discovered on one's own. Only after abandoning all such illusions will we surrender unconditionally to Christ, and only then is true bliss possible.



ASK FATHER: 3 QUESTIONS / 3 ANSWERS

Q. In last week's bulletin there was a survey dealing with contemporary moral issues. I noticed that 62% of the Orthodox Christians who participated in the survey said that they felt abortion should be legal. Is this really what the Church teaches?

A. Actually, the Orthodox Church has a very strong Pro-Life position, considering abortion to be an immoral and unlawful termination of the life which begins at conception.

Each year Orthodox Christians have a strong presence at the March For Life in Washington DC, which protests the regrettable decision of the Supreme Court to legalize abortion in the "Roe vs. Wade" case of 1973. On the "Sanctity of Life" Sunday, the Sunday closest to the anniversary of this unfortunate event in our nation's history, we ask the Lord to "enlighten the minds and hearts of those blinded to the truth that life begins at conception; enable us to guard, cherish and protect the lives of all those who are unable to care for themselves." Then we also ask the Lord to "be merciful to those who, through ignorance or willfulness, affront Thy divine goodness and providence through the evil act of abortion". This is just one example of how the Church not only condemns the act but also places great emphasis on caring for those parents who have been physically, psychologically, and spiritually traumatized by abortion.

The fact that the majority of Orthodox Christians surveyed felt that abortion should be legal indicates one of two things: 1) Orthodox Christians do not know their Church's teaching on the Sanctify of Life, or 2) we choose to disregard these fundamental truths, listening more to popular opinion than the Word of God. In fact, the survey appeared in the bulletin to point out the tragic disconnect for some Orthodox Christians between what their Church teaches and what they think personally.

Q. What about homosexuality? What does the Church teach here?

A. Throughout the Old and New Testaments two things are clear regarding this topic: 1) homosexuality, together with all other forms of sex outside marriage, is detrimental a person's spiritual well-being and growth, and therefore is revealed by God as sinful and destructive, and 2) those who struggle to overcome this obstacle can obtain their salvation in Christ just like anyone else who is challenged by a passion for greed, anger, alcohol, lust, pride, etc.. In short, God condemns the sin in order to save the sinner.

When we as a nation, community, or individually encourage homosexuality either through gay-marriage, same-sex unions, or even simply moral legitimization though mass media (TV shows like Will & Grace or the L Word), we find ourselves in disagreement with God, Who as our Chief Physician, identifies this lifestyle as unhealthy, dangerous, and destructive.

On the other hand when we despise and hate those who struggle with homosexuality either through gay-bashing, hate-crimes, or even simply by mocking them, we find ourselves at enmity with God, Who loves homosexuals enough to die on the Cross for them so that we all might be healed.

Q. Well, should the Church express her views on these and other social political issues?

A. Absolutely, the Church should express her views on these issues, and here's why:

We live in a nation whose laws, for good or bad, are written in the court of popular opinion. Usually our laws reflect the natural law innate in all of mankind – for example: it is a crime to kill, steal, rape, etc.. However, there are times when our laws contradict this natural law, and in these cases mankind suffers. This is because our man-made laws are written on mere paper and cannot overturn God's eternal truth written on the fleshly tablets of the heart. And so, when we break God's Commandments (even with the "permission" of our legal system), we self-destruct individually and collectively – it's like driving a car off a cliff and expecting it to fly just because we rewrote the manual to say that it could. A car is a car, and a human being is a human being – only the inventor and Creator can change the way they operate.

This is why in this changing world, we rely on the Church, the "pillar and ground of truth", to reveal to us how we should live before God and with one another. That's not to say that the Church should be directly involved in the legal system, writing and codifying laws – the Church's focus is elsewhere. However, it does mean that the Church has a responsibility to inform society of the dangers of breaking God's Laws – if society is driving its car off a cliff and expecting to fly, it's the Church's job to say something. Finally, we do well to remember that when our Founding Fathers set up a separation between Church and State, they never envisioned a nation in which God's voice was drowned out by the masses – they established "a nation under God," a nation whose people listened to the voice of eternal truth.