



CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF MARCH 25, 2012

SUNDAY, MARCH 25TH

Annunciation

Sunday of St. John of the Ladder

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

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28TH

7:00p.m. Canon of St. Andrew

THURSDAY, MARCH 29TH

7:00p.m. Pre-Sanctified Liturgy
 Potluck Lenten Meal

SATURDAY, MARCH 31ST

Laudation of the Virgin Mary

5:15p.m. Akathist
 6:00p.m. Great Vespers

SUNDAY, APRIL 1ST

Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt

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

Welcome Visitors

We warmly welcome all those who are visiting us today. It is good to have you all with us!

Sympathy is Expressed

to Darrell Wilson on the repose of his mother, Jerrie Rife. Should you wish to send a note to Darrell and Deborah Wilson, their address is 317 W London Ave., Salisbury, MD 21801. May Jerrie's memory be eternal! May she dwell among the Righteous!



Assistance is Needed!

To help clean out the storage room upstairs. This needs to be done today as the space is being rented by a new tenant. Please see Fr. John to offer your help. Thank you!



LAST CHANCE: Canon of St. Andrew

This beautiful service will be offered for the final time this Lent on Wednesday at 7:00pm. If you have not yet attended this service, don't miss your last chance. During the service we will read the Life of St. Mary of Egypt, one of the greatest examples of repentance and sanctity in the history of the Church. All are encouraged to attend.

Presanctified Liturgies: Only Two Left!

As the Lenten season is now half way past, we are running out of time to capitalize on the special lenten services. One of the greatest services is the Presanctified Liturgy of which there are only two left, March 29 and April 4.

The Mysteries of Confession and Communion

should be received by all Orthodox Christians on a regular basis and at the very least during the Great Fast and Pascha. If you have not availed yourself of these life-giving sacraments, please be sure to do so. Likewise, frequent communicants should make a confession during this and every lenten period, and whenever the conscience is burdened. To make a confession, please see Fr. John.



Renovation Update

We are currently about \$10,000 short of the amount needed to complete the renovations. For more information, please see Fr. John or orthodoxdelmarva.org

READER SCHEDULE

Sunday, Apr. 1st

Bruce Eckerd

Sunday, Apr. 8th

Gabriela Jones



Prayer List: Fr. Michael Mihalick, Fr. Alexander Atty, Fr. Christian, Mat. Dunia, Kelly Elizabeth & Ana Lucia, Bill Parrish, Hayley, Tyler Pelesh, Jerrie Rife, Wallace & Michelle, Ryan & Kayla, Maleah Morsey, Victoria Kokkinos, Ed Tucker, Karen Nichols, Denise Royal, Simeon, Scott & Maryann, Garrett Cuppels, Jane Koshutko, Nicholas & Linda, Nina Gordon, Mirela & Chris, Troy Duker, Mary Miranda, Bruce, Stella, Lilly Barnett, Amy F., Nedelina, Henrietta Stack, Archimandrite Pachomy, Michelle Patapios.

OPERATING THRU 2/29/12			MARCH OPERATING			RENOVATION TO PARISH CENTER		
Income	Expense	Net	Income	Goal	Difference	Income + Loan	Goal	Expense
9,253	9,931	-678	2,461	4,858	-2,397	41,511 + 30K	80,000	65,149

CONFESSION AS A SOCIAL ACTION

Featured Article on Antiochian.org / By Jim Forest

It is impossible to imagine a healthy marriage or deep friendship without confession and forgiveness. If we have done something that damages a relationship, confession is essential to its restoration. For the sake of that bond, we confess what we've done, we apologize, and we promise not to do it again; then we do everything in our power to keep that promise.

In the context of religious life, confession is what safeguards and renews our relationship with God whenever it is damaged. Confession restores our communion with God and with each other.

It is never easy to admit to doing something we regret and are ashamed of, an act we attempted to keep secret or denied doing or tried to blame on someone else, perhaps arguing—to ourselves as much as to others—that it wasn't actually a sin at all, or wasn't nearly as bad as some people might claim. In the hard labor of growing up, one of the most agonizing tasks is becoming capable of saying, "I'm sorry."

Yet we are designed for confession. Secrets in general are hard to keep, but unconfessed sins not only never go away, but have a way of becoming heavier as time passes—the greater the sin, the heavier the burden. Confession is the only solution.

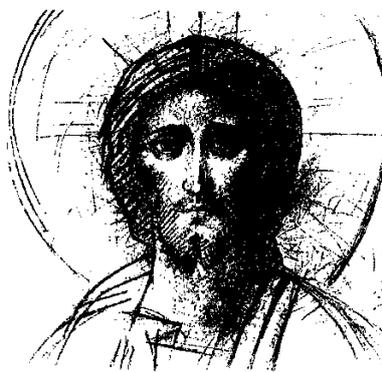
To understand confession in its sacramental sense, one first has to grapple with a few basic questions: Why is the Church involved in forgiving sins? Is priest-witnessed confession really needed? Why confess at all to any human being? In fact, why bother confessing to God, even without a human witness? If God is all-knowing, then He knows everything about me already. My sins are known before it even crosses my mind to confess them. Why bother telling God what He already knows?

Yes, truly God knows. My confession can never be as complete or revealing as God's knowledge of me and of all that needs repairing in my life.

A related question we need to consider has to do with our basic design as social beings. Why am I so willing to connect with others in every other area of life, yet not in this? Why is it that I look so hard for excuses, even for theological rationales, not to confess? Why do I try so hard to explain away my sins, until I've decided either that they're not so bad, or even that they might be seen as acts of virtue? Why is it that I find it so easy to *commit* sins,

yet am so reluctant, in the presence of another, to admit to having done so?

We are social beings. The individual as autonomous unit is a delusion. The Marlboro Man—the person without community, parents, spouse, or children—exists only on billboards. The *individual* is someone who has lost a sense of connection to others or attempts to exist in opposition to others—while the *person* exists in communion with other persons. At a conference of Orthodox Christians in France a few years ago, in a discussion of the problem of individualism, a theologian confessed, "When I am in my car, I am an individual, but when I get out, I am a person again."



We are social beings. The language we speak connects us to those around us. The food I eat was grown by others. The skills passed on to me have slowly been developed in the course of hundreds of generations. The air I breathe and the water I drink is not for my exclusive use, but has been in many bodies before mine. The place I live, the tools I use, and the paper I write on

were made by many hands. I am not my own doctor or dentist or banker. To the extent that I disconnect myself from others, I am in danger. Alone, I die, and soon. To be in communion with others is life.

Because we are social beings, confession in church does not take the place of confession to those we have sinned against. An essential element of confession is doing all I can to set right what I did wrong. If I stole something, it must be returned or paid for. If I lied to anyone, I must tell that person the truth. If I was angry without good reason, I must apologize. I must seek forgiveness not only from God, but from those whom I have wronged or harmed.

We are also verbal beings. Words provide a way of communicating, not only with others, but even with ourselves. The fact that confession is witnessed forces me to put into words all those ways, minor and major, in which I live as if there were no God and no commandment to love. A thought that is concealed has great power over us.

Confessing sins, or even temptations, makes us better able to resist. The underlying principle is described in one of the collections of sayings of the Desert Fathers:

If impure thoughts trouble you, do not hide them, but tell them at once to your spiritual father and condemn them. The more a person conceals his thoughts, the more they multiply and gain strength. But an evil thought, when revealed, is immediately destroyed. If you hide things, they have great power over you, but if you could only speak of them before God, in the presence of another, then they will often wither away, and lose their power.

Confessing to anyone, even a stranger, renews rather than contracts my humanity, even if all I get in return for my confession is the well-worn remark, "Oh, that's not so bad. After all, you're only human." But if I can confess to anyone anywhere, why confess in church in the presence of a priest? It's not a small question in societies in which the phrase "institutionalized religion" is so often used, the implicit message being that religious institutions necessarily undermine spiritual life.

Confession is a Christian ritual with a communal character. Confession in the church differs from confession in your living room in the same way that getting married in church differs from simply living together. The communal aspect of the event safeguards it, solidifies it, and calls everyone to account—those doing the ritual, and those witnessing it.

In the social structure of the Church, a huge network of local communities is held together in unity, each community helping the others and all sharing a common task, while each provides a specific place to recognize and bless the main events in life, from birth to burial. Confession is an essential part of that continuum. My confession is an act of reconnection with God and with all the people who depend on me and have been harmed by my failings, and from whom I have distanced myself through acts of non-communication. The community is represented by the person hearing my confession, an ordained priest delegated to serve as Christ's witness, who provides guidance and wisdom that helps each penitent overcome attitudes and habits that take us off course, who declares forgiveness and restores us to communion. In this way our repentance is brought into the community that has been damaged by our sins—a private event in a public context.

"It's a fact," writes Fr. Thomas Hopko, rector of St. Vladimir's Seminary, "that we cannot see the true ugliness and hideousness of our sins until we see them in the mind and heart of the other to whom we have confessed."

A Communion-Centered Life

Attending the liturgy and receiving Communion on Sundays and principal feast days has always been at the heart of Christian life, the event that gives life a eucharistic dimension and center point. But Communion—receiving Christ into ourselves—can never be routine, never something we deserve, no matter what the condition of our life may be. For example, Christ solemnly warns us against approaching the altar if we are in a state of enmity with anyone. He tells us, "Leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matt 5:24). In one of the parables, He describes a person who is ejected from the wedding feast because he isn't wearing a wedding garment. Tattered clothing is a metaphor for living a life that reduces conscience to rags (Matt ch. 22).

Receiving Christ in Communion during the liturgy is the keystone of *living* in communion—with God, with people, and with creation. Christ teaches us that love of God and love of neighbor sum up the Law. One way of describing a serious sin is to say it is any act which breaks our communion with God and with our neighbor.

It is for this reason that examination of conscience—if necessary, going to confession—is part of preparation for Communion. This is an ongoing process of trying to see my life and actions with clarity and honesty—to look at myself, my choices, and my direction as known by God. The examination of conscience is an occasion to recall not only any serious sins committed since my last confession, but even the beginnings of sins.

Conscience is an inner faculty that guides us in making choices that align us with God's will, and that accuses us when we break communion with God and with our neighbor. Conscience is a reflection of the divine image at the core of each person. In *The Sacred Gift of Life*, Fr. John Breck points out that "the education of conscience is acquired in large measure through immersing ourselves in the ascetic tradition of the Church: its life of prayer, sacramental and liturgical celebration, and scripture study. The education of our conscience also depends upon our acquiring wisdom from those who are more advanced than we are in faith, love, and knowledge of God."

Conscience is God's whispering voice within us calling us to a way of life that reveals God's presence and urges us to refuse actions that destroy community and communion.

NO DAMAGE REPORTED IN DIOCESE OF MEXICO AFTER QUAKE

MEXICO CITY [OCA]

His Grace, Bishop Alejo of Mexico City, reported that the Cathedral of the Ascension here was not affected by the powerful and prolonged earthquake that rocked Mexico and parts of Central America on Tuesday, March 20, 2012.

While electricity and phone service were cut off, there were no immediate reports of serious damage in Mexico City.

Bishop Alejo added that no damage to any of the diocese's other parishes or missions had been reported.

The 7.6 magnitude quake was centered in southern Guerrero state, near the border with Oaxaca state, a sparsely populated area about 115 miles from the tourist resort of Acapulco and 100 miles from Oaxaca City.



CONDOLENCES SENT TO COPTIC CHURCH ON THE REPOSE OF POPE SHENOUDA III

SYOSSET, NY [OCA]

In a letter addressed to His Eminence, Pachomius, Metropolitan of Beheira and Exarch of Pentapolis and the Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah, sent condolences on behalf of the hierarchs, clergy, and people of the Orthodox Church in America on the repose of His Holiness Shenouda III, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of All Africa Saturday, on March 17, 2012. The text of the letter reads as follows.

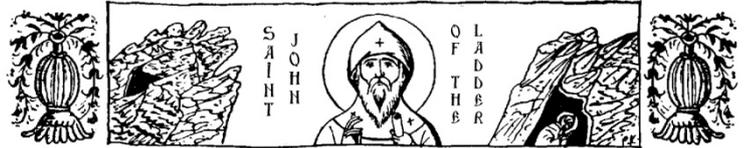
"The falling-asleep of His Holiness Shenouda, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of All Africa, brings grief and sadness into the hearts of all. The Coptic Orthodox Church grieves for its shepherd. The whole Christian world grieves for a Pope and Patriarch who was steadfast in his witness to the Holy Gospel in Egypt and all of Africa, in North America and around the world.

"Our grief is not the grief of those who have no hope. We live in hope of the resurrection. His Holiness lived and died in hope of the resurrection.

"The life and preaching of His Holiness, and his long illness and falling asleep, are testimonies to his abiding faith in the Risen Christ. Pope Shenouda leaves for all of us the gift of the joy of Christ's Resurrection. He leaves for his flock and all of us the preaching and practice of the ways of peace.

"The present time of change and transition in Egypt has led again to the martyrdom of Christians. Yet it is also a time which we pray will give hope for a better future of peace and equality for all Egyptians. We pray for the safety and welfare of the Coptic Orthodox Church and her people.

"On behalf of the bishops, clergy, and people of the Orthodox Church in America I convey to Your Eminence and the Holy Synod, to all bishops, priests, monastics and laity of the Coptic Orthodox Church, our condolences. We are by your side in prayer and sympathy, with open hearts affirming our unity in faith and hope."



Advice to Those Living in the World From Step 1 of the Ladder of Divine Ascent

Some people living in the world have asked me: "We have wives and are beset with social cares, and how can we lead the spiritual life?" I replied to them: "Do all the good you can; do not speak evil of anyone; do not steal from anyone; do not lie to anyone; do not be arrogant towards anyone; do not hate anyone; do not be absent from the divine services; be compassionate to the needy; do not offend anyone; do not wreck another man's domestic happiness, and be content with what your own wives can give you. If you behave in this way, you will not be far from the Kingdom of Heaven."



Give What You Cannot Keep

A person is no fool who gives what they cannot keep, to gain what they cannot lose. Ultimately, what can we keep? Not our money, not our material goods, not the time spent doing foolish things. We can keep only what we have won by losing our lives for Christ's sake: our inner peace, our salvation, and our good name listed among the servants of God. This is the Lord's promise, "Whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it." (Matt 8:35)

