

CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF FEBRUARY 4, 2007



Congratulations Baby Jacob McFarland!

on your Holy Baptism, this past Sunday, Jan. 28th. For those who missed the Baptism, pictures are available on the parish website.

Update on Isabelle Valentina

Isabelle is at home and is slowly getting better each day. We eagerly await her return to church as we continue our prayers for her full recovery. On behalf of Jodi and her entire family, thank you all for your prayers and support!

Please Remember in Prayer

the newly departed servant of God, John Barsigian, grandfather to Fr. John Parsells, who reposed on Thursday, February 1, 2007. May his memory be eternal! Fr. John will be away for the beginning portion of the week to attend the funeral. If you need to contact him, please call him on his cell phone, 908-872-6589.



A Memorial for all Departed Parishioners, Family, and Friends

will be served this Saturday, February 11th, at 9:00a.m. On this Memorial Saturday, Orthodox Christians worldwide gather in their churches to offer prayers for the souls of their departed loved ones. We will especially remember this day, the two year anniversary of the repose of the servant of God, John Balas, son of John and Anna Balas. Please be sure to attend this service as we offer our prayers for the departed.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4TH

PRODIGAL SON SUNDAY

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

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10TH

MEMORIAL SATURDAY

9:00a.m. Memorial Service
 6:00p.m. Vespers; Confessions

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11TH

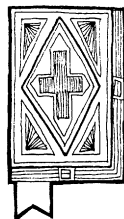
SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT

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



Bible Study: Meeting of our Lord

On Tuesday, February 13th, from 7:00-8:30pm, a Bible Study will be held at the church to look at the event of our Lord's presentation in the Temple when He was forty days old. All are welcome and encouraged to attend! Bring a Bible and a friend!



Church Readers Urgently Sought

If you have any experience at all reading in church, or would like to learn, please speak with Fr. John. This important ministry brings much reward and is urgently needed in our parish. All are welcome: men, women, and children!

The "Souper" Bowl of Caring

is an IOCC (International Orthodox Christian Charities) sponsored event designed to help local food banks and charities. Today, on Super Bowl Sunday, February 4th, each parishioner is asked to bring a can of food (or more) for our local food pantry, and \$1.00 (or more) for our local pregnancy aid center. A collection basket will be placed in the coffee hour room.



The Finance Committee

will meet monthly, on the first Tuesday which follows the meeting of the Parish Council. The Parish Council normally meets on the 1st Sunday of the month. The next Council meeting will be in March.

Enlarging Your Circle of Friends

Often times when we come to church we find ourselves mingling with the same group of people; people with whom we may have a special affinity or perhaps people with whom we may have formed lasting friendships – and this is a great and wonderful thing! Yet, at the same time, we mustn't pass up the opportunity to interact with and get to know people outside our circle of friends. There is nothing better than a unified parish, whose circle of friendship includes everyone. Take a moment each Sunday to get to know someone different – you won't regret it!



The Upcoming Parish Directory

will be released soon. A rough draft of the directory will be in the back of the church until Sunday, February 11th. Please be sure to check to make sure your listing is accurate. If your listing does not appear, please see Fr. John, ASAP.



CHURCH BULLETIN BLOOPERS

From Various Sources



"Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Don't forget your husbands."

"Low Self-Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 to 8:30p.m. Please use the back door."

"At the service tonight, the sermon topic will be "What is Hell?" Come early and listen to our choir practice."

"The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been canceled due to a conflict."



METROPOLITAN HERMAN CELEBRATES 75TH BIRTHDAY

SYOSSET, NY [OCA Communications] – February 1, 2007 marked the 75th birthday of the Primate of the Orthodox Church in America, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman. We wish Metropolitan Herman health, peace, and every blessing on his 75th birthday, imploring Our Lord to grant him many, many years of ministry in the vineyard of Our Lord.

For the full article, please see: <http://oca.org/News.asp?ID=1161&SID=19>

FEATURE FILM ABOUT ORTHODOX MONK SWEEPS RUSSIAN FILM AWARDS

Sophia Kishkovsky

Moscow (ENI) – A feature film about repentance - as embodied by a Russian Orthodox monk tormented by his wartime past - has swept top prizes at Russia's main film awards ceremony. "Ostrov," or "Island," took six Zolotoi Oryol, or Golden Eagle awards, including best film, director and actor at a ceremony on 27 January. The film stars Pyotr Mamonov, a Soviet-era underground rock star who has become a devout Orthodox believer and now lives in an isolated village.



Structured like a parable, "Ostrov" tells the tale of Father Anatoly, a fictional monk who for decades seeks God's forgiveness for shooting a fellow monk at the Nazis' behest during the Second World War to save his own life. The film is set in the 1970s in a remote northern island monastery, a timeframe for which some have taken the film to

task since the church was then still repressed by the State.

Patriarch Alexei II, and other senior clerics, praised "Ostrov" for its profound depiction of faith and monastic life. Addressing a church conference on 29 January, the Patriarch called "Ostrov" a "vivid example of an effort to take a Christian approach to culture".

"Ostrov", which was the closing film at the 2006 Venice Film Festival, was also a top box office draw in Russia's state-of-the-art new Dolby-outfitted multiplexes after its November release, playing alongside Hollywood blockbusters. Its television broadcast on 7 January, the Russian Christmas, drew ratings during the extended holiday season, second only to President Vladimir Putin's New Year's Eve address.

The director Pavel Lungin has said of his film: "We tried to convey in it, a sense that there is a God, that we are not alone on this earth."

DEATH, FUNERAL, REQUIEM -- ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS, CUSTOMS AND PRACTICE

By Archpriest Victor Sokolov

Death is something that awaits all of us and yet we often wish to avoid thinking about it. As Christians, we understand earthly death as a gateway to life eternal. Preparing ourselves spiritually and making practical arrangements in advance for our funeral is very important. Here is some practical information about Orthodox rites and funeral planning.



Why Funeral Planning is Important

- ❖ It helps give meaning to a person's life;
- ❖ It enables family and friends to come together to express feelings of love, grief and sadness;
- ❖ It helps family and friends accept the reality of death, so that they can overcome the emotional pain.

Funeral planning helps ease the pain. By planning now, you can relieve stress and take away some burden on family and friends later.

The Basic Funeral Question

One of the most basic decisions in funeral planning is what to do with the body. However, for the Orthodox Christian there is no choice: according to the Holy Canons of the Church, the body of a deceased Christian must be returned to the earth. Cremation is specifically forbidden. The body is placed in a casket and set in a grave. It is necessary to have a cemetery plot, a grave liner or vault (if required by law), and a marker or monument with the image of the Cross.

Organ Donation

There is nothing in our Church's doctrine prohibiting the donation of needed organs after a person's death. On the contrary, the Lord enthusiastically approves the laying down of one's life for his friends (John 15:13). He would surely welcome the sharing of organs no longer needed with those whose lives could be prolonged and saved.

Orthodox Burial Rites

The mystery, the human anguish, the sense of loss, the desire for continued communion... these things have from antiquity found their ritualized form of expression in each culture and age. Some of these expressions have been sanctified in the liturgical life of the



Church. One needs only to call to mind the Church's orderly way of visiting the graves of the departed (St. Thomas Sunday, the Day of Rejoicing) and how we remember them liturgically.

Orthodox liturgical rites for the dying, the burial of the dead, and the remembrance of the dead include the following:

- ❖ **Office of the Parting of the Soul from the Body.** The relatives or close friends of the gravely ill should invite the priest (and a chanter) to his bedside so that this moving and spiritually enriching rite can be sung.
- ❖ **Office of the Parting of the Soul from the Body, when a Person Endures Prolonged Suffering.** Together with the priest, we sing prayers asking God to mercifully let His servant depart in peace.
- ❖ **Office of the Burial of the Dead.** Essentially, this is the Matins service, with the canon and other hymns closely resembling those of Great Saturday Matins - Christ's burial. Ideally, this rite should be performed in the church temple, with the coffin positioned in the middle of the temple. However, exceptions are possible and this rite can be performed either at the funeral home's chapel or in the cemetery chapel. In any case, contact your priest as soon as possible or instruct your funeral director to do so on your behalf so that all details of the funeral can be arranged in accordance with the traditions of the Church.
- ❖ **The Panichida, Litya, Parastas, etc.** The Panichida (also called a Parastas, Litya, or Trisagion) for the departed is served:
 1. at the funeral home on the evening before the burial;
 2. on the days of special commemoration: 9th day, 40th day, yearly anniversaries, Memorial Saturdays. Since these days are known, your priest (as well as a choir director) should be informed and asked to celebrate the services well in advance.
 3. The Litya (or Trisagion) for the departed can be celebrated at the conclusion of almost any service. However, it is not proper to sing the Panichida at the conclusion of a Resurrectional Divine Liturgy on Sunday (we do not have funerals on Sundays, either): memorial services may be sung on Saturday evening, immediately before the Vespers service.

Traditionally, when we celebrate the memorial services, a dish of boiled, soft-shell wheat or barley should be prepared by the relatives or friends of the deceased. It should be sweetened with sugar, honey, raisins or other dry fruit. This *koliva* is offered to all participants in the service in remembrance of the Lord's words: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." (John 12:24 RSV).

Also, those who offer this memorial service to the Lord should purchase and distribute candles to the clergy, the singers, and to all who are in attendance. Lit candles symbolize our hope in the Resurrection -- that Christ, the Light of the World, will raise us up to join Him at His glorious Second Coming. (This is the same hope which we express when we hold lit candles at the Resurrectional Service on Pascha night.)



Can we offer a Panichida for our dead relatives and friends who were not members of the Orthodox Christian Church?

Strictly speaking, no. It is not that we cannot pray for them (we can and should!), but that the service itself is entirely geared to Orthodox Christians who have died. It would be inappropriate to "make" an Orthodox Christian of someone who was not and perhaps would not have wanted to be! So, what can we do? There is, in the priest's service book, a memorial rite for non-Orthodox Christians. It does not include the specific litanies and hymns which would not be appropriate, but does include the Psalms and hymns which are general and not specifically aimed towards Orthodox Christians.

Funeral Service in the Church

- ❖ The body of the dead person, having been placed in a coffin, is carried -- feet first -- into the church for the burial service and set in the center of the nave -- facing the altar.
- ❖ The coffin is opened and an icon of Christ or the patron Saint is placed in the hands of the departed.
- ❖ A wreath (with the Trisagion printed on it) is placed on the forehead of the departed.
- ❖ The hand-cross is placed in the coffin near the head of the departed.
- ❖ Candles are distributed to the worshipers who, receiving the light from the priest, hold them lit throughout the service until near the end.
- ❖ After the Dismissal and "Memory Eternal," friends come to say a last good-bye to the de-

parted. They may kiss the hand-cross which is set on the side of the coffin or the icon placed in the hands of the departed. The closest relatives should be given an opportunity to spend several minutes with the departed alone. Then the coffin is closed and carried out from the church to the hearse. The choir sings the Trisagion, and the bells are rung slowly.

- ❖ The funeral cortege proceeds to the cemetery where a short grave-side service of entombment is sung by the priest.

The Blessing of the Cross at the Grave

Since pre-Christian times, it has been customary to mark the place of burial by the erection of a grave mound. The Christian Church has adopted this tradition, beatifying the grave mound with the victorious sign of our salvation -- the Holy Life-giving Cross, which may be depicted on a gravestone or elevated over it. The cross on the grave mound is placed at the feet of the buried Christian, so that he will be facing the Crucifix.



When the monument is placed on the grave, the relatives of the departed invite the parish priest to the cemetery for The Rite of Blessing of the Cross.

Other Questions

Again, there are many questions and problems which the relatives of the departed may face. For example, they may like to have flowers specially arranged; to have a guest book; acknowledgment cards; prayer cards; to arrange a memorial meal, etc. Whenever these question arise, feel free to ask the funeral director and/or your parish priest: they understand how you feel and will do everything possible to ease your burden.

They will advise you on gifts or donations that you may give on behalf of the deceased: it is always a good idea to commemorate the conclusion of the earthly journey of a believer by making a memorial donation to his or her church.

ON PRAYERS FOR THE DEPARTED

From These Truths We Hold

The Orthodox Church's prayers for the dead are based upon faith in the universal resurrection and on the unity of the Church on earth and in heaven. By His Resurrection, our Lord Jesus Christ showed that death is not annihilation to non-existence, but the gate to life and immortality. The Christian looks on death as the transition to eternal life.