



CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF MARCH 25, 2007

SUNDAY, MARCH 25TH

ANNUNCIATION TO THEOTOKOS
One of the Twelve Great Feasts

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

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28TH

7:00p.m. Holy Unction

FRIDAY, MARCH 30TH

7:00p.m. Matins

SATURDAY, MARCH 31ST

LAZARUS SATURDAY

8:40a.m. Hours
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy
6:00p.m. Vespers; Confessions

SUNDAY, APRIL 1ST

PALM SUNDAY

One of the Twelve Great Feasts

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



FOR CONSIDERATION

*Our words may hide our thoughts,
but our actions reveal them.*

What do my actions reveal about what I *really* think about God, His Church, and His call to repent and enter into His Kingdom? About my neighbor, the world, and my life? In what practical ways can I live my faith more fully?

The Sacraments of Confession and Communion

should be received by all Orthodox Christians during the season of Great Lent. If you have not approached the Chalice since last Pascha, or if you are a frequent communicant and have not been to Confession since the Nativity Fast, now is the time. Fr. John is available to hear confessions, following any service or at any other time by appointment. If you have not been to confession in a long time, or if you would like to learn more about making a meaningful confession, there is an excellent, and very short book in the back of the church, entitled *Preparing for Confession*. If you would like to make your confession in Russian, please see Fr. Daniel. Pascha is April 8th this year, only two weeks away, don't be caught unprepared for the Feast of Feasts.



The Mystery of Holy Unction

will be served on Wednesday, March 28th, at 7:00 in the evening. The Church's practice of anointing with holy oil for the healing of soul and body dates back to Apostolic times, when St. James wrote, "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the presbyters (priests) of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." (James 5:14) According to Church discipline, those who wish to receive this Mystery should approach only after having first received Confession during Great Lent.

Church Attendance

Overall attendance for the weekend and weekday services is up. For the Sunday Divine Liturgy we are averaging 43 people this winter. This is 33 percent more people than last winter when the average was only 32. This is without a doubt a positive sign for parish growth. May the Lord continue to bless those who faithfully gather to sing His praises at the Divine Services!



Many Thanks

to those who helped clean the church this week (and in the past)! May the Lord reward you for your zealous care for His House!

The Parish Website

has a new section entitled "For Inquirers", which will attempt to answer questions about Orthodoxy and how it differs from other Christian confessions. Highlighted in this area is a short but moving video presentation on Orthodoxy. Check it out!



Spring is Here

As you plan your spring cleaning, home improvements, and landscaping projects, please consider purchasing your supplies via our Script program; see Kathy or Jen to help support our Mission!



THOUGHTS ABOUT SICKNESS

By Father Thomas Hopko

Sickness exists in the world because of sin. There would be no sickness at all, neither mental nor physical, if man had not sinned. According to Christ sickness is bondage to the devil. (Matthew 8:16, 12:22; Luke 4:40-41; 13:10-17) And Christ has come to "destroy... the devil." (Hebrews 2:14) With Jesus the forgiveness of sins, the healing of the body, the destruction of the devil, and the raising of the dead are all one and the same act of salvation.

For which is easier to say, "Your sins are forgiven," or to say "Rise . and walk"? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins — He then said to the paralytic — "Rise, take up your bed and go home." And he rose and went home. (Matthew 9:4-7, Mark 2:9-12, Luke 5:23-25) In that hour He cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many that were blind he bestowed sight. (Luke 7:21)

Doing these things Jesus showed that He is Christ the Messiah, the fulfillment of the prophets who brings the Kingdom of God to the world.

... the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the good news of the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not scandalized at me. (Luke 7:22-23; cf. Isaiah 29:18-19, 35:5-6, 61:1; Matthew 4:23-24, 11:4-6)

When one is delivered from sin and evil, one is also freed from sickness and death. In the Kingdom of God there will be "no sickness or sorrow or sighing, but life everlasting." (Requiem of the Church)

God's Use of Sickness

Given the sinfulness of the world, its bondage to the devil, its "groaning in travail" (cf. Romans 8:19-

23) until its salvation in Christ, God Himself uses sickness and death for His providential purposes as the means for man's salvation. God is not the cause of sickness, suffering, and death; but given their existence because of the devil's deceit and man's wickedness and sin, God employs them that man might be healed and saved in the forgiveness of sins. In this sense, and this sense only, can it be said that "God sends sickness to man."

When a spiritual person is sick he recognizes that his illness is caused by sin, his own and the sins of the world. He does not blame God for it, for he knows that God has not caused it and does not wish it for His servants. He knows as well, through the providential plan of God and the salvation of Christ, that his sickness will be healed. He knows also that if God so wills, he can be healed of his sickness in this life in order to have more time to serve God and man on earth, and to accomplish what he must according to God's plan. He also knows as well that the very sickness itself can be the means of serving God, and he accepts it in this way, offering it in faith and love for his own salvation and for the salvation of others.

Our Use of Sickness

There is no greater witness to the love of God and faith in Christ than sickness endured with faith and love. The one who bears his infirmities with virtue, with courage and patience, with faith and hope, with gladness and joy, is the greatest witness to divine salvation that can possibly be. Nothing can compare to such a person, for God's praise in distress and affliction is the greatest possible offering that man can make of his life on earth.

Every saint who ever lived suffered bodily infirmities. And all of the saints, virtually without exception — even when healing others by their prayers — did not ask for or receive deliverance for themselves. This is the case most evidently of Jesus Himself, the suffering servant of God.

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; as one from whom men hide their faces ... Surely He has borne our grief, and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, upon Him was the chastisement that healed us, and with His wounds we are healed... the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53)

Christ "poured out His soul to death" (Isaiah 53:12) when he was only in the third decade of His life. Many of the saints hardly lived longer, and virtually

Thoughts About Sickness continued from page 3...

all suffered, as did St. Paul, from some "thorn in the flesh," normally understood as some bodily affliction.

... a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I besought the Lord about this, that it should leave me; but He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness," that the power of Christ may rest upon me... for when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

All spiritual persons follow the example of Christ and Saint Paul and all of the saints in their understanding of sickness. They say to God the Father, "Thy will be done," and transform their infirmities, by the grace of God, into the means of salvation for themselves and others.



WISDOM FROM THE FATHERS

"Every day you provide your bodies with good to keep them from failing. In the same way your good works should be the daily nourishment of your hearts. Your bodies are fed with food and your spirits with good works. You aren't to deny your soul, which is going to live forever, what you grant to your body, which is going to die."

St. Gregory the Great

"Beguiling and deceptive is the life of the world, fruitless its labor, perilous its delight, poor its riches, delusive its honors, inconstant, insignificant; and woe to those who hope in its seemingly good things: because of this many die without repentance. Blessed and most blessed are those who depart from the world and its desires."

Elder Nazarius

"When anyone is disturbed or saddened under the pretext of a good and soul-profitting matter, and is angered against his neighbor, it is evident that this is not according to God: for everything that is of God is peaceful and useful and leads a man to humility and to judging himself."

St. Barsanuphius the Great

"It is better to eat meat and drink wine and not to eat the flesh of one's brethren through slander."

Abba Hyperechius

The Annunciation continued from page 2...

God who had created him, and was deceived by the guile of the serpent, becoming subject to death by his own transgressions, Thou, O God, in Thy righteous judgment, didst send him forth from Paradise into this world, returning him to the earth from which he was taken, yet providing for him the salvation of regeneration in Thy Christ Himself."

The Archangel Gabriel was sent by God to Nazareth in Galilee. There he spoke to the undefiled Virgin who was betrothed to St Joseph: "Rejoice, thou who art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

In contrast to Eve, who was readily deceived by the serpent, the Virgin did not immediately accept the Angel's message. In her humility, she did not think she was deserving of such words, but was actually troubled by them. The fact that she asked for an explanation reveals her sobriety and prudence. She did not disbelieve the words of the angel, but could not understand how they would be fulfilled, for they spoke of something which was beyond nature.

Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Luke 1:34). "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: therefore also that which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible.' And Mary said, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.' And the angel departed from her" (Luke 1: 35-38)."

In his Sermon 23 on the day of the Annunciation, St Philaret of Moscow boldly stated that "the word of the creature brought the Creator down into the world." He explains that salvation is not merely an act of God's will, but also involves the Virgin's free will. She could have refused, but she accepted God's will and chose to cooperate without complaint or further questions.

