



CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF DECEMBER 16, 2007

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16TH HOLY FOREFATHERS OF CHRIST

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

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22ND

6:00p.m. Vespers

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23RD SUNDAY BEFORE NATIVITY

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



On the Mark of Christianity

This is the mark of Christianity-- however much a man toils, and however many righteous deeds he performs, to feel that he has done nothing... and so say, "I am only just beginning to struggle for the Lord and to practice His ways." And even if he is righteous before God, he should still say, "I am not righteous, not I; I do not struggle enough, and each day I only make a beginning in the Christian life."

St. Macarius the Great

Congratulations!

to the Parsells family on the birth of baby Alexander, who was born on Wednesday, December 12, 2007, at 12:35am. Alexander, despite being born at 32 weeks, is doing very well. He weighed in at 4 pounds, 1 ounce. Please keep him and Matushka Emily in your prayers. May God grant them many years!



For Updates On Our Move

to the new church at Vines Creek, please check our website: orthodoxdelmarva.org. Photos have been, and will be, posted as the work continues. Any important announcements regarding the move will also be posted on the website. If you don't have the internet, please give Fr. John or one of the Council members a call for updates.



Confession Times

Fr. John is available to hear Confession at almost any time. If you cannot make it to church either before or after a scheduled service, Fr. John can meet you at the church at just about any other time. If you would like more information about preparing for Confession, or if you have any other questions about it, please feel free to speak with your priest.

Congratulations to Fr. Daniel Hubiak

on his Namesday, Monday, December 16th (the Prophet Daniel), and also on his upcoming birthday, December 29th. May God grant him and Matushka Dunia (who are away in warm and sunny Florida through the New Year) many blessed years!

Flowers / Decorations for Christmas

Donations are being requested for Christmas flowers and decorations. If you would like to make an offering please either speak with one of the ushers or Susan Pappas, our treasurer. Many thanks in advance!



Suggestions for Celebrating Christmas

- 1) Give thanks to God by attending Church.
- 2) Seek peace with those we may be at odds with.
- 3) Give an anonymous gift to a stranger in need.

READER SCHEDULE

Sunday, Dec. 23rd

Hours: Jen Alexion
Epistle: Jen Alexion

Sunday, Dec. 30th

Hours: TBD
Epistle: TBD



New Christmas Cards

are available for purchase in our coffee hour room. These beautiful cards have been donated by Troika Cards for the benefit of our Mission. If we are able to sell them all we will bring in \$175!

The New Orthodox Study Bible

which includes both Old and New Testaments will be available this February. If you would like to preorder a copy please sign the list in the back of the church. The cost of the new Study Bible will be about \$35.00.



LOOKING FOR MIRACLES IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES

Fr. William J. Mills

Throughout the years people have often ask me why we don't have miracles like they did back in Jesus' time. When reading the Bible we encounter many miracles, Moses dividing the Red Sea, Elijah healing the widow's son, Jesus walking on the water, Jesus driving out demons from people, and of course the biggies, such as Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead and then the biggest miracle of all, Jesus' own resurrection. If we read the Bible carefully we will encounter these miracles along with many others.

Today when people encounter a miraculous event they usually chalk it up to scientific technology, good medicine, or an act of nature. At 9:00am on the morning of 9/11 many people left their offices in the Twin Towers in order to get coffee and bagels for their co-workers. Five minutes later two jet airplanes flew right into the Towers, killing thousands of people and maiming hundreds more. The survivors considered this a miracle. However, other people say well, it was just a coincidence that they left, after all, coffee runs are usual in big companies.

Just a few weeks ago a man was flying a jet plane and for some reason the plane crashed. The man was found safe and sound sitting in his cockpit in a tree, not even getting a scratch. People said that it was the type of wind sheer that allowed the cockpit to fall gently and safely. However, surely this man sees it as a miracle. Furthermore, a few months ago there was a lady who gave birth to six children who were three months premature. They survived even though they were very small and had little chance of surviving. People also chalk this up to good science. So many things happen to people and we try to "figure it out" citing science, medicine, or nature.

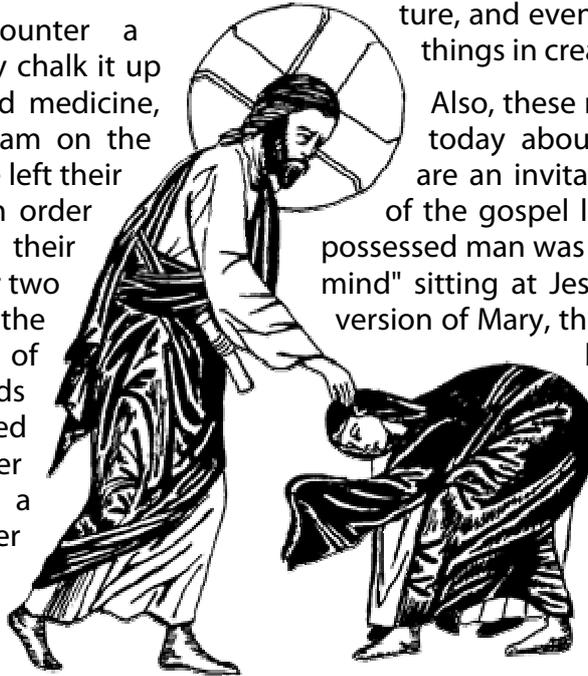
Perhaps these events or situations are God giving us a glimpse of the kingdom of heaven. After all, this is what miracles are anyway, little glimpses into God's rule and authority. However, we miss the power of the message as did the people in the time of Jesus. Not much as changed since then, as the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes says, "there is nothing new under the sun." Then as now people want to be entertained. They had magicians,

fortune-tellers, and astrologers and we have circus' and Hollywood with special effects to razzle-dazzle us. Yet, Jesus' was not a magician nor was he trying to entertain people, although many thought they were being entertained. At one point when Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes they wanted to seize him in order to make him a king! They saw his power in human terms, missing the point that Jesus was directing them to the kingdom. Jesus' miracles are a sign of his kingship, but his kingship is not of this world. His power is over disease, nature, and even death. God is the god over all things in creation.

Also, these miracles, like the one we heard today about the demon possessed man are an invitation of faith. Towards the end of the gospel lesson we heard that the once possessed man was found "clothed and in his right mind" sitting at Jesus' feet. This man is the male version of Mary, the one whose sister Martha was busy preparing lunch complaining that her sister Mary wasn't helping her. Yet all the while Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet as an act of faith, learning and listening from her Master.

The gospel of Luke provides us with many miracles of Jesus, the woman who was healed from her flow of blood, the Roman centurion's servant who was ill, and the cleansing of the lepers. These people approached Jesus in faith and they were healed of their disease and discomfort because of their faith; because they came to Jesus for help. And compared to the big miracles that we often think about, the parting of the Red Sea for instance, these miracles in the gospel are quite small, Jesus' really didn't do much, he says a few words and people are restored to health and well-being.

Yet all too often we overlook the hundreds of small miracles in our life, the small glimpses into the kingdom of God because we are too darn busy seeking the big miracles, the walking on water type of miracle. We overlook the many miracles of family members being reconciled to their family after being pushed out or living in self induced exile, the miracle of a restored friendship, and the miracle of life itself. I think we do this because deep down we would rather be entertained and excited and we don't want Jesus interfering in our



Continued on page 4...

ASK FATHER: 2 QUESTIONS / 2 ANSWERS

Does the Orthodox Church have married priests?

In the Orthodox Church priests may be married – it has been this way since the times of the Apostles, when the Apostle Peter and other apostles were married. The Roman Catholic Church began the move to a celibate priesthood only in the 4-5th centuries and only in certain areas and by custom. Today, of course, there is required celibacy among priests in the Roman Catholic Church but this practice was never adopted in Orthodox Christianity.



The Orthodox Church fully honors the sanctity of marriage and sexual relations within this context and considers neither of these to be an obstacle to the priesthood. It should be noted that priests (or deacons) who wish to marry must do so before being ordained. However, this is just so that the practicalities associated with courting or dating do not complicate the ministry of the ordained.

Why do Orthodox Christians seem to worship saints and pray to them if there are to be no gods before the One True God? Should we not just use their lives as examples.

While in the Orthodox Church we do pray to saints, we definitely do not worship them. Prayer in the Biblical sense is simply communication, talking with God or even talking with each other. And as God is the God of the living and those united to Christ are alive in Him, we do not feel death to be an obstacle to continued communication or prayer with the Lord's saints (remember St. Paul calls all Christians "saints" or "holy ones"). Of course, after death the communication between us and the saints becomes less earthly and more spiritual, more like the manner in which we communicate with God Himself. As far as honoring the saints, we do this because as you have said they are examples for us. And in the saints we see God's own light, love, glory, etc. – it is God Himself who is glorified in His saints. The saint is simple a vessel of God's grace, simply a mirror reflecting the Lord's glory. And so, by honoring the saints we honor God Himself Who through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ has made it possible for mankind to be holy once again.

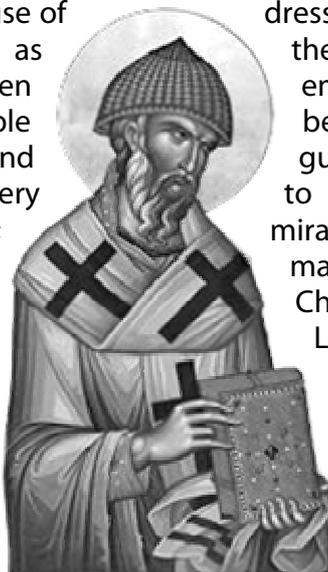


SAINT SPYRIDON THE WONDERWORKER

Celebrated December 12th



The island of Cyprus was both the birthplace and the place where this glorious saint served the Church. Spyridon was born of simple parents, farmers, and he remained simple and humble until his death. He married in his youth and had children, but when his wife died he devoted himself completely to the service of God. Because of his exceptional piety, he was chosen as bishop of the city of Tremithus. Yet even as a bishop he did not change his simple way of living, handling his livestock and cultivating his land himself. He used very little of the fruits of his labor for himself; instead, he distributed a greater share to the needy. He manifested great miracles by God's power: he brought down rain in time of drought, stopped the flow of a river, raised several people from the dead, healed Emperor Constantius of a grave illness, saw and heard angels of God, foresaw future events, discerned the



secrets of men's hearts, converted many to the true Faith, and did much else. He took part in the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea [325], and he brought many heretics back to Orthodoxy by his simple and clear expositions of the Faith as well as by his mighty miracles. He was so simply dressed that once, when he wanted to enter the imperial court at the invitation of the emperor, a soldier, thinking that he was a beggar, struck him on the face. Meek and guileless, Spyridon turned the other cheek to him. He glorified God through many miracles, and was of benefit, not only to many individuals but also to the whole Church of God. He entered into rest in the Lord in the year 348. His miracle-working relics rest on the island of Corfu, and even today they glorify God with many miracles.

From the Prologue of Ochrid by Saint Nikolia Velimirovich.



Looking for Miracles continued from page2...

life. After all, it is a fearful thing when we encounter the Lord. The great crowds in the reading today were afraid because of what Jesus did to the possessed man, they were so afraid that they demanded that Jesus leave them immediately. Often we push Jesus out of our life too because we can't deal with the kingdom, we want to focus on the here and now. How sad, because all the while Jesus was directing these people to the kingdom, offering them the bread of life, and they were satisfied with popcorn and cotton candy, how sad indeed!

BOWERBIRDS GET READY FOR NEW LIFE

By Parish Publishing LLC

The Bowerbird of Australia and New Guinea is a fascinating bird. The male constructs an elaborate home for the female, preparing her a place to live, and especially a place to lay her eggs. Not only does the bowerbird build a home, he builds a beautiful one.

In Australia the Bowerbird often will select a favorite color ... frequently blue ... and pick up blue shreds of paper, blue balloons, anything blue, and build it into the house. The Gardener Bowerbird of New Guinea builds a roofed house, three feet wide made of orchid stems. He then carpets the floor and entrance with soft moss and even decorates it with fresh flowers and berries. As the flowers and berries fade he replaces them with fresh ones. (I imagine a lot of women would like to have that kind of male around the house!)

The male Bowerbirds do elaborately what all birds do. They prepare a place where eggs can be laid. They get it ready. They help new life come into the world, and be healthy and strong. St. John the Baptist was the Bowerbird of the Gospel. He was the one who prepared for the arrival of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, and got things so Christ's word could be heard in the world and be strong. He was the one who made important preparations so that Christ's word could be effective.

As we prepare for the coming of Christ during Advent, we think of that lovely and precious gift of Jesus Christ. And, as we receive, so we are moved to give. To give of ourselves, to each other. To give to those in need. To give ourselves in worship. So let the theme of this Christmas season be giving and receiving. Receiving first, the amazing grace of God in the gift of Jesus Christ. Then to give; a gift for someone in need. A thank-offering of money for the Lord's work at our church.

ABOUT MELCHIZEDEK (GENESIS 14:17-20)

Abraham led his army into battle against four kings to deliver his nephew Lot, who was held prisoner with the inhabitants of Sodom. Abraham won the battle, recovered his belongings, and freed his family. After this battle, he met a certain king, of whom no one knows either the country or origin. He appears in the Bible as a mysterious figure:

"He was without father or mother or genealogy, and has neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever." (Heb 7:3)

Abraham offers Melchizedek a tenth of his booty, as to a superior. In return, the king blesses him and, as the priest of the Most High, offers bread and wine in sacrifice. This is the only offering of bread and wine in the Old Testament, and it prefigures the unbloody sacrifice we offer at the Eucharist, following Christ, whose blood replaces all victims (see Heb. 7).

Melchizedek is King of Salem, which means "king of peace." This figure appears to be, according to St. Paul and certain Fathers of the Church, an apparition of Christ, before His Incarnation.

