



CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF SEPTEMBER 13, 2009

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13TH
SUNDAY BEFORE THE HOLY CROSS

8:40a.m. Hours
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour
7:00p.m. Great Vespers w/ Litiya

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14TH
EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS
One of the Twelve Great Feasts

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

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19TH
5:00p.m. Orthodoxy 101
6:00p.m. Great Vespers

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20TH
SUNDAY AFTER THE HOLY CROSS
8:40a.m. Hours
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour
Parish Council Meeting



Abba Xanthias once said, "A dog is better than I am, for he has love and he does not judge."

READER SCHEDULE

Sunday, Sept. 20th
Kathy Parrish

Sunday, Sept. 27th
Jodi McElwee



Exaltation of the Holy Cross – September 14th

This feast commemorates the finding of the True Cross of Christ by St. Helen, the mother of St. Constantine the Great. The service schedule for this 12 Great Feast can be found on the left. On this day, Fr. Daniel Hubiak was ordained to the Holy Priesthood. We wish him and Mat. Dunia, many blessed years! Fr. Daniel and Mat. Dunia also celebrate their anniversary of marriage on September 16th. If you would like to send a card, their address is: 16 Wharf Court, Ocean Pines, MD 21811.

The Parish Council

will meet on Sunday, September 20th, following the coffee hour.

Baptism of Bruce Eckerd – September 26th

On Saturday, September 26th, Bruce Eckerd will be received into the Orthodox Church through the Mystery of Holy Baptism. The service will begin at 4:30pm with Great Vespers at 6:00pm. There will be no Orthodoxy 101. Please come to celebrate this special day for Bruce and our community!



The Postfeast of the Exultation of the Precious Cross

is celebrated from September 14th through September 21st, the "leave-taking" of the feast. Throughout this time the troparion and kontakion for the feast are sung or said with our morning and evening prayers (we may also add, "Before Thy Cross"), and at meal times; the troparion before the meal and the kontakion after.

Troparion (Tone 1)

O Lord, save Thy people, And bless Thine inheritance. Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians over their adversaries. And by virtue of Thy Cross, preserve Thy habitation.

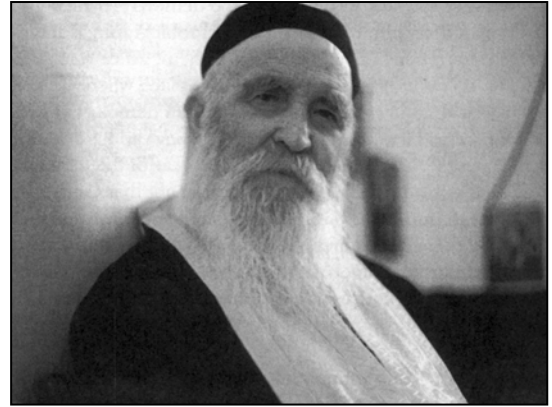
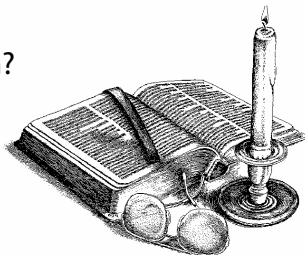
Kontakion (Tone 4)

As Thou wast voluntarily crucified for our sake, Grant mercy to those who are called by Thy Name; Make all Orthodox Christians glad by Thy power, Granting them victory over their adversaries, By bestowing on them the invincible trophy, Thy weapon of peace.



HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THE SCRIPTURES?

- 1) It is impossible to please God without ____?
 - a) good works
 - b) love
 - c) charity
 - d) faith
- 2) What is the fourth Commandment?
 - a) Thou shalt not make any graven image
 - b) Thou shalt not commit adultery
 - c) Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy
 - d) Thou shalt have no other gods before Me
- 3) Why was Abraham counted righteous?
 - a) for his good works
 - b) he followed the law
 - c) for his faith
 - d) all of the above
- 4) It is ok to seek the guidance of a psychic.
 - a) true
 - b) false
- 5) For where your _____ is, there will your heart be also.
 - a) reward
 - b) riches
 - c) mind
 - d) treasure
- 6) Who asked Herod for the head of John the Baptist?
 - a) Herodias
 - b) the daughter of Herodias
 - c) Athaliah
 - d) Candace
- 7) There are 200 Psalms in the Bible?
 - a) true
 - b) false
- 8) The Cross was made of the following types of wood:
 - a) cedar, oak, cypress
 - b) cedar, cypress, pine
 - c) olive, cypress, pine
 - d) olive, oak, pine
- 9) According to the Gospels, Christ was transfigured in glory before Peter, James, and John on Mount _____.
 - a) Herman
 - b) Zion
 - c) Tabor
 - d) none of the above
- 10) What does Emmanuel mean?
 - a) Jesus
 - b) Savior
 - c) Man of God
 - d) God with us



FROM THE COUNSELS OF ELDER PHILOTHEOS OF PARA

True happiness is not the honors and pleasures of the body. True happiness is virtue. As many as fight to acquire virtue, to put into practice the commandments of God, these are truly happy.

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When the enemy tempts you with thoughts of faithlessness, with all your heart say, "I believe completely whatever the Church believes, whatever Christ says in the Holy Gospels, whatever the Holy Apostles and Holy Fathers said. I don't, however, believe you, devil, for you are a liar and a thief.

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If a man builds a house and leaves it without a roof, this house can't be used at all. In the same way, if a man acquires all the virtues but not love, the house remains roofless and is of no benefit at all.

Answer to Scriptural Questions

1. d, Hebrews 11:6
2. c, Exodus 20:8-11
3. c, Romans 4:1-3
4. b, Deuteronomy 18:10-14
5. d, Matthew 6:21
6. b, Mark 6:21-25
7. b, 150
8. b, Isaiah 60:13
9. d, Although early church tradition holds that the place of the Transfiguration was Mt. Tabor, none of the Gospel accounts mention it by name.
10. d, Matthew 1:23



TRIBULATION IN THIS LIFE

Fr. Steven C. Kostoff



Our parish Prayer Request List is currently, as is often the case, filled with the names of men, women and children who are in some condition of illness, suffering or loss. We have recently been praying for our own beloved parish child, Elias Wendland, who has been in the hospital struggling with pneumonia; and a child in our sister parish in Columbus who appears to have been born with a debilitating or fatal illness. In fact, such prayer lists are by nature a sustained chronicle of the kind of human suffering and misery we pray and hope to avoid. As we pray to God for relief and recovery from these flesh-and-blood manifestations of our "human condition," we fulfill a ministry that all Christians need to embrace with seriousness. Our part is to hold these persons before God in prayer. The results we leave up to God. It is only human to pray with greater intensity when a particular person in need of prayer is close to us. But we need to pray for everyone who is on our "list" as the names come to us. That is one of our roles as the "people of God" who are aware of living in a fallen world that has yet been redeemed by Christ.

I am not going to embark on a meditation concerning God's mercy, justice, and love in the face of human suffering: the question of "theodicy" as it is often called. That will always remain a mystery. However, we should always bear in mind that the New Testament makes no promise of a life free of precisely the kind of human suffering we are speaking about here. There is no "bargain" or "deal" with God, that in return for our faith and belief in Christ, we will be given a long, peaceful and prosperous life! That fantasy may exist in the minds of TV evangelists and "name it and claim it" preachers, but it is not in the Scriptures. Christians with a mature faith know better. (We of course believe in the possibility of "miraculous" recovery, and have countless instances of such healing throughout the Church's long history. In fact, the Sacrament of Anointing is based on our openness to just such a possibility. But that is a different issue.) Jesus Christ suffered and died on the Cross. His resurrection from the dead transformed that suffering into a passage that leads to a glorified life with God. As the Lord, He is the "first-fruits"



of that promised resurrection and glorified life. That is the hope of Christians in the face of suffering and death, both of which are absolutely inevitable. And that is a hope that unbelievers cannot share regardless of how "optimistic" they may be about life - in my humble opinion, a very unconvincing optimism. That hope may be realized here and now in the recovery that we pray for, or it may have to patiently await its eschatological fulfillment at the end of time.

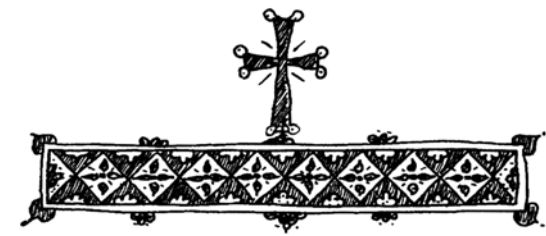
To move this reflection from the general to the particular, I would like to bring up a recent experience. In a prayer request submitted by Presvytera Deborah just last week, I read the following: "Please pray for Juana, a young beggar girl we encountered in Antigua who has no hands or feet.

Pressing on my heart." I would like to further provide a bit of background about our short and unsettling encounter with this little girl. Our Mission Team made a trip to Antigua toward the end of our recent stay in Guatemala, after visiting the monastery of the Holy Trinity and celebrating the Liturgy there with Madres Ines and Maria. Antigua is a very old Guatemalan city popular with visitors and tourists. This

is a typical one-day excursion for most Mission Teams - an opportunity to "wind down" and relax a bit after a week or more of work at the Hogar. It is a kindness organized by the Hogar which also provides the transportation in the person of Jorge, brother of Madre Ivonne and indefatigable Mission Team coordinator - a wonderful and good-hearted man. As is our "tradition" on our many parish teams, we visit one of the many fine restaurants in Antigua for a group meal together. This year we took eight of the señoritas with us so that we could treat them to a meal and some shopping.

While in the restaurant I noticed an obviously poor young girl enter carrying a large purse. She may have been ten years old or so. Sadly, I noticed that her one arm was missing from just below the elbow, but she managed to hold up the purse at her elbow joint. A fuller glance revealed that both arms were missing at about the same point. It then became clear that the girl entered the restaurant

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THE EXALTATION OF THE PRECIOUS CROSS

Celebrated on September 14th



Saint Helen, the mother of Saint Constantine the Great, when she was already advanced in years, undertook, in her great piety, the hardships of a journey to Jerusalem in search of the cross, about the year 325. A

temple to Aphrodite had been raised up by the Emperor Hadrian upon Golgotha, to defile and cover with oblivion the place where the saving Passion had been suffered. The venerable Helen had the statue of Aphrodite destroyed, and the earth removed, revealing the Tomb of our Lord, and three crosses. Of these, it was believed that one must be that of our Lord, the other two of the thieves crucified with Him; but Saint Helen was at a loss which one might be the Wood of our salvation. At the inspiration of Saint Macarius, Archbishop of Jerusalem, a lady of Jerusalem, who was already at the point of death from a certain disease, was brought to touch the crosses, and as soon as she came near to the Cross of our Lord, she was made perfectly whole. Consequently, the precious Cross was lifted on high by Archbishop Macarius of Jerusalem; as he stood on the ambo, and when the people beheld it, they cried out, "Lord have mercy." It should be noted that after its discovery, a portion of the venerable Cross was taken to Constantinople as a blessing. The rest was left in Jerusalem in the magnificent church built by Saint Helen, until the year 614. At that time, the Persians plundered Palestine and took the Cross to their own country (see Jan. 22, Saint Anastasius the Persian). Late, in the year 628, Emperor Heraclius set out on a military campaign, retrieved the Cross, and after bringing it to Constantinople, himself escorted it back to Jerusalem, where he restored it to its place.

Tribulation in this Life continued from page 3...

in order to "beg," as she began to move from table to table with a rather awkward gait. (During her time in the restaurant, someone also noticed that she walked in a peculiar manner because she obviously had no feet. There was only a rather primitive contraption at the end of each leg, resembling a shoe, that helped her maintain her balance). The way the patrons were reacting told me that this was not so unusual of a sight. Reflect for a moment on how the management in one of our nicer restaurants here would "protect" their patrons from such an encounter! For all we knew, that same girl may have come to this restaurant often to seek alms, and I appreciated that possibility. It seems much more organic and honest, perhaps even breaking down some of the usual social stratification that we are so accustomed to. Yet, since our social and cultural setting does shelter us from such encounters, it proved to be unsettling for everyone, I believe, as mentioned above. It was impossible not to feel great pity for this girl.

Unfortunately, though, it appeared from my perspective that she was not being very successful that day. Christ taught us that our left hand should not know what our right hand is doing in terms of almsgiving (MATT. 6:3-4). I do not want to violate the Lord's teaching, but I do not want you to think that we also ignored this poor little girl's request for assistance as others may have been doing. We called her over and put something in her purse. Presvytera asked her "what is your name?" and she answered with a very warm and friendly smile, "Juana." That smile alone rendered rather meaningless and empty a great deal of our "talk" about the "quality of life." With that same smile on her face, she turned and left the restaurant. We will probably never see Juana again - or perhaps on our next Mission Team visit to Antigua? Be that as it may, she left an indelible and haunting image that will be hard to forget. Hence, she is now a unique person and child of God not forgotten in our prayer.

Such is the world we live in for countless human beings, including children. Juana is representative of the flawed and fallen world we inhabit. Think, just for a moment, of her future. Yet she, and the world as it is, are the "object" of God's continuing love. That love - incarnate in Christ - does not make suffering disappear, but it has transformed its meaning. Christians have to now incarnate that love in their care for others, making Christ present in a tangible manner whenever called upon to do so. That may be the most convincing "proof" of Christ's presence among us as a living reality, and not just as an ideal from the past.

Fr. Steven C. Kostoff is the parish rector of Christ the Savior/Holy Spirit Orthodox Church in Cincinnati, OH. He is also an adjunct faculty member at Xavier University in Cincinnati, where he teaches in the theology department.