

CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF MAY 22, 2016

A Warm Welcome!

We warmly welcome all of our visitors! It's good to have you!

The Parish Council

will meet on Sunday, May 22nd, following the coffee hour. All are welcome to attend the meeting, which will be held in the church.



The Feast of Mid-Pentecost

is celebrated this year on Wednesday, May 25^h. On this feast we bless water, recalling how the Lord cried out to all in the midst of the feast, "If anyone thirsts let him come to me and drink!" The Vespers and Blessing of Water will be served on Tuesday, May 24th at 7:00pm, and the Divine Liturgy will be served on Wednesday, May 25th at 9:00am. All are encouraged to attend!

About Holy Water

The water that will be blessed on Mid-Pentecost may be used for drinking (health of soul and body) and for blessing (homes, cars, gardens, etc.). Holy Water is grace-filled and offers health, protection, and sanctification. Often a bottle of Holy Water is kept in the refrigerator for frequent use throughout the year.

Annual Memorial Day Pilgrimage

The Memorial Day Pilgrimage to St. Tikhon's Monastery in South Canaan, PA is Monday, May 30th. If you are interested in going, please let Fr. John know.



Supporting A Local Pregnancy Center

A charitable drive, "Bottles of Blessing!", is underway. You can pick up a Baby Bottle after services to take home and collect your loose change (cash and checks also accepted!). Return your bottle on Fathers' Day. This is to benefit The Shirley Grace Pregnancy Center in Berlin where women are cared for both materially and spiritually during their pregnancy. Call 443-513-4124 if you'd like more information.

Two Suggestions

1) Invite someone new to church; 2) Talk to someone new today.



Have An Idea?

Do you have any idea that you would like to share about our Mission? Please let Fr. John or one of the Council know as we always look for ways to improve the Mission!

SUNDAY, MAY 22ND

Sunday of the Paralytic

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

TUESDAY, MAY 24TH

7:00p.m. Great Vespers w/
Blessing of Water

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25TH

Mid-Pentecost

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

SATURDAY, MAY 28TH

6:00p.m. Great Vespers

SUNDAY, MAY 29TH

Sunday of the Samaritan Woman

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

READER SCHEDULE

Sunday, May 29th

Alexis Oleynik

Sunday, June 5th

Megan Borodulia



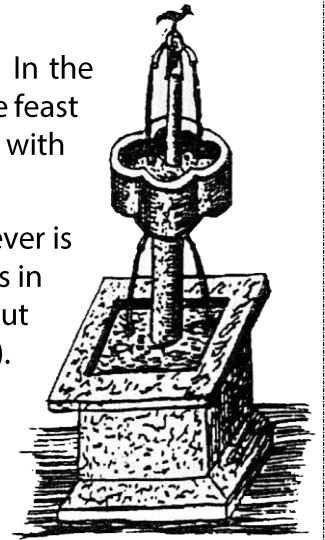
CASH FLOWS THROUGH 4/30/16					CASH FLOWS IN MAY 2016					FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT		
OPERATING		OTHER		ALL	OPERATING		OTHER		ALL	AS OF: 5/22		
Income	Expense	Income	Expense	Net	Income	Expense	Income	Expense	Net	Checking	Overdue	Mortgage
28,768	25,685	5,620	1,120	+7,583	7,263	8,375	2,250	6,335	-5,197	7,449	0	320,068

MIDFEAST OF PENTECOST

The time of Pentecost is 50 days. Indeed, the word Pentecost, means “fifty.” In the middle of the feast, that is on the 25th day, always a Wednesday, we celebrate the feast known as Mid-Pentecost. The feast unites and connects Pascha (the beginning) with Pentecost (the ending).

The symbol of water provides the theme for the feast of Mid-Pentecost. “Whoever is thirsty should come to Me and drink.” As the Scriptures says, “Whoever believes in Me, streams of life-giving water will pour out from his heart.” Christ said this about the Spirit which those who believe in Him were going to receive (John 7:37-38). This passage is also part of the Gospel reading for the Sunday of Pentecost.

Anticipating the gift of the Holy Spirit by Christ, the Troparion and Kontakion of Mid-Pentecost express the yearning of the believer with these words:



Troparion

In the middle of the Feast, O Savior, fill my thirsting soul with the waters of godliness, as Thou didst cry to all: If anyone thirsts let him come to Me and drink! O Christ God, Fountain of our life, glory to Thee!

Kontakion

Christ God, the Creator and Master of all, cried to all in the midst of the feast of the law: Come and draw the water of immortality! We fall before Thee and faithfully cry: Grant us Thy bounties, for Thou art the Fountain of our life.

A Blessing of Water takes place on this feast. We may bring vessels to church the next time we come for services so as to bring the newly-blessed waters to our homes.



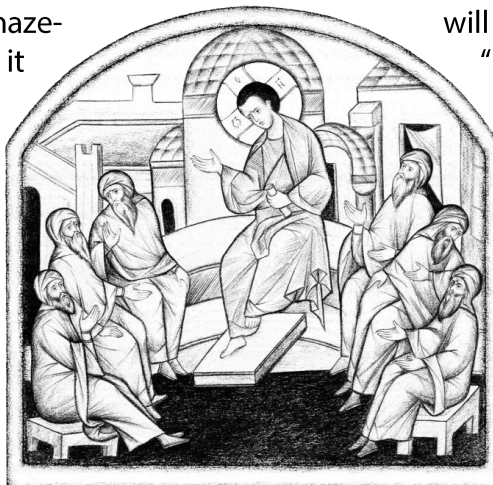
THE ICON OF MID-PENTECOST

From the Incarnate God – Volume 2



The iconography adopted by the Church to illustrate Mid-Pentecost shows us Jesus Christ teaching in the Temple, just as in the Gospel. Christ is sitting at the center of a circle of Jewish scholars and wise men. These express their amazement at His knowledge: “How is it that this Man has learning, when He has never studied?” (John 7:15). In answer to this question, Jesus speaks of His connection to the Father, of His divine origin.

Most often, the icons of Mid-Pentecost represent Christ’s first encounter in the Temple with the doctors of the Law – this is the episode described by St. Luke, when Jesus was twelve years old (Luke 2:41-50). “Did you not know that I must be in My Father’s house?,” He says to His worried parents, thus openly declaring that He is the Son of God and that He must carry out His mission. On that day,



Christ declares His independence from Joseph and Mary, escaping their tutelage. He tells them about His unique link with God the Father. He accepts filial obedience to the end, an obedience which will lead Him all the way to the Cross. “Not My will, but Thy will be done!” (Luke 22:42).

Divine Wisdom is revealed to the doctors of the Law who admire the wisdom of the Child, revealing Jesus as the Child-Emmanuel announced by the Prophets (Isaiah 7:14). The authority of His teaching is already confirmed during His infancy, for “He is before all things,” He precedes creation (Colossians 1:17 and Proverbs 8:22-30), “He is begotten, not made, of one essence with the Father” (the Creed). He is “the Wisdom, the Word, and the Power of God” (From Matins of Pascha).

Ask Father: 2 Questions / 2 Answers

Q. As Orthodox Christians, people of the New Testament, are we required to keep the Sabbath?

A. This is a good question for a couple of reasons: 1) you are concerned about what God requires of us, and 2) you ask about that often misunderstood day called the Sabbath.

Let's look at the question about what is required of us. The short answer is that nothing is required of us. When God gave us free will, He meant it. The Lord didn't create robots with remote controls. He created human beings in His image and likeness – totally free to make decisions for themselves, totally free to choose right or wrong, good or evil, life or death. The Lord doesn't require anything of us.

Well, then you say, why does He punish us if we don't keep His commandments? Another excellent question, but believe it or not, the truth of the matter is that the Lord actually doesn't punish us. When we break God's commandments we do suffer, yet the suffering is not God taking out His wrath on us; this type of language is used only to instruct beginners in the spiritual life who will only turn to the Lord out of fear. Proverbs 9:10 says that this fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom but the knowledge of God's holiness is understanding. God is infinitely good and loving. He does not look down from heaven to rain down a thunderbolt upon the next person who sins. In fact, just the opposite is true, He looks down with love and compassion, even coming down Himself from heaven to die for us in order to bring us up into His Father's Kingdom. When we break God's commandments, we suffer, not because of God's vengeance, but because we ourselves have chosen something that is not good for us, we have chosen evil over good-



ness, death over life. God's commandments are nothing more than the laws or ways which lead to happiness and blessedness, the ways which lead to our Heavenly Father, the Source of all goodness and life. When we choose not to follow the commandments, we choose to separate ourselves from God, and in so doing we choose the only alternative to His goodness and life, that is, evil and death. The suffering we experience when we sin is simply the result of using our free will unwisely. Moses spoke of this when after he presented the Israelites with God's 10 Commandments he said to them: "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life, so that both you and your children may live, so that you may love the Lord your God, and that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him. For He is your life and the length of your days." (Deut. 30:19-20)

Now on to part two of your question: The Sabbath was given by God as a day of rest, a day in which the Israelites were commanded not to work, so that they might give thanks to God for everything He had given them: His divine presence, their fellow human beings, and the whole world. They were told to keep this day holy as an everlasting commandment (Exodus 31:16). As God Himself "rested" after the creation of the world so too man must learn to rest after his work; and the rest man needs most is rest in God. This resting in God is necessary to experience life in its fullness. Resting refreshes us and makes us ready, not just for more work again, but more importantly for what is truly essential – life with God and each other. As we know, Christians from the earliest days of the Church experienced this true life with God and each other most perfectly on Sundays. Therefore it seemed to them both natural and providential that God had ordained the Sabbath day's rest on the day before the Lord's Day, so that they would be fully refreshed and renewed to celebrate the Resurrection. Each week, they performed their earthly work, rested from these labors on the Sabbath (Saturday) and then fully replenished celebrated the Lord's Day with worship, fellowship, study, and charitable service. In short, the Sabbath rest allowed the first Christians, as it allows us today, to have Sunday as a day of joyous activity, a day to live life more abundantly with the Lord and each other, a day to experience the Kingdom of God on earth.

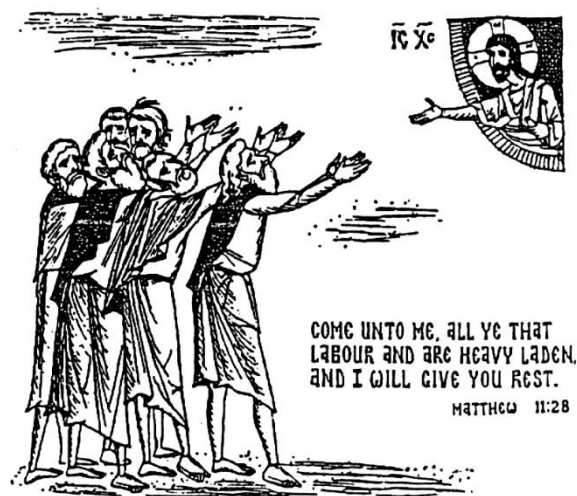
Q. My work responsibilities make it nearly impossible for me to have Saturdays off or even to be in Church on Sundays for that matter, what should I do?

A. This is not an easy question to answer. Economic pressures and financial responsibilities weigh on us very heavily these days. Working long hours and many days a week, leaves us physically, emotionally, and spiritually spent. And ironically, we feel like we cannot take the main remedy the Lord offers for our exhaustion – the weekend. Remember, God gives us Saturday and Sunday to lay aside our heavy earthly burdens for a while so that we might be refreshed and renewed, enjoying life with Him and each other. He even cries out, “Come to Me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!” (Matt. 11:28) Unfortunately, though, not fully responding to this invitation to godly rest can sometimes make us feel guilty, frustrated, or upset. What can be done?

For some people, it might be time to find a different job, for others there might be a way to reorganize our work schedule or perhaps take a different day off during the week to refresh ourselves, and for still others the situation might just simply need to be struggled through for a period.

But generally speaking, if we find ourselves unable to observe both days, then at the very least we should do everything possible to be present on Sunday when the community gathers to worship in the Church. This should be the most important part of not just our weekend but the entire week itself.

Finally, I would say that probably the best thing to do is to talk with your priest about your personal situation. As with anything in the spiritual life, speaking with one’s priest indicates to God that you have humility and are truly seeking the best course of action. Asking for advice also alleviates the conscience, and the last thing the Lord wants is for anyone to be burdened by these Holy Days. After all, He gave these days to loose our burdens, not to add to them. This is why He said, “the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” (Mark 2:27) The Lord wants us to rejoice in these holy days, crying out TGIF (Thank God its Friday), time for the weekend – rest, praise and joy – time for God and each other!



A PUZZLING SCRIPTURAL VERSE

'He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.' (Malachi 3:3)

This verse puzzled some women in a Bible study and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God. One of the women offered to find out the process of refining silver and get back to the group at their next Bible Study. That week, the woman called a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest beyond her curiosity about the process of refining Silver.

As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest as to burn away all the impurities. The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot; then she thought again about the verse that says: 'He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver.' She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time. The man answered that yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed. The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, 'How do you know when the silver is fully refined?' He smiled at her and answered, 'Oh, that's easy -- when I see my image in it.'

If today you are feeling the heat of the fire, remember that God has his eye on you and will keep watching you until He sees His image in you.

