

We would like to welcome all parish visitors and invite you to join us after the Liturgy for Coffee hour.

ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE MOTHER OF GOD
OCA – Diocese of New York-New Jersey

V. Rev. Dr. Matthew Searfoorce, Rector

Sub-Deacon Edward Dawson

Sub-Deacon Vlashi

Parish Council President: Andrew Romanofsky

Parish Council Vice President: Dean Inferrera



Sunday, August 13, 2017

Gospel: Matthew 17:14-23

Tone 1

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16

10th Sunday after Pentecost:

Leavetaking of the Transfiguration. St. Tikhon, Bishop of Vorónezh, Wonderworker of Zadónsk and All Russia

Translation of the Relics of St. Maximus the Confessor (662). Uncovering of the Relics of Ven. Maxim of Moscow, Fool-for-Christ (ca. 1547). Martyr Hippolytus of Rome and those with him: Martyr Concordia, Irenæus, and Abundius (258). The Icon "PASSION" of the Most-holy Theotokos.

Troparion – Tone 7

You were Transfigured on the Mount, O Christ God, / Revealing Your glory to Your disciples as far as they could bear it. / Let Your everlasting Light shine upon us sinners! / Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Giver of Light, glory to You!

Kontakion – Tone 7

On the Mountain You were Transfigured, O Christ God, / And Your disciples beheld Your glory as far as they could see it; / So that when they would behold You crucified, / They would understand that Your suffering was voluntary, / And would proclaim to the world, / That You are truly the Radiance of the Father!



Leavetaking of the Transfiguration of our Lord

Prayer Requests

For Health of:

Trudy & Phil Ellmore, on their wedding anniversary, offered by Trudy.

Mark Dantinne, on his birthday, offered with love by his godmother Tammy Zimmerman, Nick & Elizabeth.

Barbara Knighton, sister of Archbishop Michael, presently hospitalized, offered by Archbishop Michael, the Diocese of NY/NJ & the Orthodox Church of the Mother of God. **Archpriest Ilya Gotlinsky & Presbyter Irene Frawley**, both receiving medical treatment, offered by Archbishop Michael and the Diocese of NY/NJ.

Archpriest Thomas and Matushka Evelyn Edwards, celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary today Sunday, August 13, offered by Archbishop Michael and the Diocese of NY/NJ.

In Memory of:

Andrew, on the untimely passing and repose in the Lord yesterday of the nephew of Archpriest Martin and Matushka Dennise Kraus, offered by Archbishop Michael and the Diocese of NY/NJ.

The Philokalia: Daily Readings

Since we have spoken of the knowledge of the virtues, we will also speak about the passions. Knowledge comes like light from the sun. The foolish man through lack of faith or laziness deliberately closes his eyes - that is, his faculty of choice.

- St Peter of Damascus, A Treasury of Divine Knowledge

Liturgical Schedule

Sunday, August 13th

9:40 am: Hours

10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Saturday, August 19th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, August 20th

9:40 am: Hours

10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Saturday, August 26th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, August 27th

9:40 am: Hours

10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Saturday, September 2nd

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, September 3rd

9:40 am: Hours

9:45 am: General

Confession

10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Saturday, September 9th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, September 10th

9:40 am: Hours

10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Bulletin Sponsors

***Trudy Ellmore; Tammy
Zimmerman***

Readings:

The Prokeimenon in the 1st Tone:

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us / as we have set our hope on Thee!

(Psalm 32:22)

vs. Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous! Praise befits the just!

(Psalm 32:21)

Another, Tone 4 (Feast):

O Lord, how manifold art Thy works; in wisdom hast Thou made them all!

(Psalm 103:24)

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16

Brethren, God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are ill-clad and buffeted and homeless, and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become, and are now, as the refuse of the world, the off-scouring of all things. I do not write this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I urge you, then, be imitators of me.

Alleluia in the 1st Tone:

God gives vengeance unto me, and subdues people under me.

(Psalm 17:48)

vs. He magnifies the salvation of the King and deals mercifully with David, His anointed, and his seed forever.

(Psalm 17:51)

Another, Tone 8 (Feast):

The heavens are Thine; the earth also is Thine.

(Psalm 88:12)

Gospel: Matthew 17:14-23

At that time, when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and kneeling before him said, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly; for often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him." And Jesus answered, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me." And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured instantly. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you." As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day." And they were greatly distressed.

Orthodox Quote of the Day

A young person ought to keep company with other spiritually mature young people in order to be helped and move within a spiritual atmosphere. Let's not make things more difficult than they are.

**St. Paisios of Mount Athos
Spiritual Councils IV: Family Life 35**



Leavetaking of the Transfiguration of our Lord

On the Leavetaking of the Transfiguration, all of the service for the Feast is repeated, except for the Entrance at Vespers, the Old Testament readings, Litya, the Polyeleos and Gospel at Matins, and the blessing of grapes at Liturgy. The Gospel and Epistle readings a



St. Tikhon the Bishop of Voronezh and Wonderworker of Zadonsk and All Russia

Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk, Bishop of Voronezh (in the world Timothy), was born in the year 1724 in the village of Korotsk in the Novgorod diocese, into the family of the cantor Sabellius Kirillov. (A new family name, Sokolov, was given him afterwards by the head of the Novgorod seminary). His father died when Timothy was a young child, leaving the family in such poverty that his mother was barely able to make ends meet. She wanted to give him to be raised by a neighbor, a coachman, since there was nothing with which to feed the family, but his brother Peter would not permit this. Timothy often worked a whole day with the peasants for a single piece of black bread.

As a thirteen-year-old boy, he was sent to a clergy school near the Novgorod archbishop's home, and earned his keep by working with the vegetable gardeners. In 1740, he was accepted under a state grant set up for the Novgorod seminary. The youth excelled at his studies. Upon finishing seminary in 1754, he became a teacher there, first in Greek, and later in Rhetoric and Philosophy. In the year 1758, he was tonsured with the name Tikhon. In that same year they appointed him to be prefect of the seminary.

In 1759, they transferred him to Tver, elevating him to be archimandrite of the Zheltikov monastery. Later, they appointed him rector of the Tver seminary and, at the same time, head of the Otroch monastery.

His election as bishop was providential. Metropolitan Demetrius, the presiding member of the Holy Synod, had intended to transfer the young archimandrite to the Trinity-Sergiev Lavra. On the day of Pascha, at Petersburg, Archimandrite Tikhon was one of eight candidates being considered for selection as vicar-bishop for Novgorod. The lot fell on him three times.

On the same day, during the Cherubic Hymn, Bishop Athanasius of Tver, without realizing it, commemorated him as a bishop while cutting out particles from the prosphora at the Table of Oblation. On May 13, 1761 he was consecrated Bishop of Keksgolma and Ladoga (i.e., a vicar bishop of the Novgorod diocese).

In 1763, Saint Tikhon was transferred to the See of Voronezh. During the four and a half years that he administered the Voronezh diocese, Saint Tikhon provided constant edification, both by his life and by his numerous pastoral guidance's and soul-saving books. He wrote a whole series of works for pastors:

*Concerning the Seven Holy Mysteries
A Supplement to the Priestly Office
Concerning the Mystery of Repentance
An Instruction Concerning Marriage*

The saint considered it essential that each priest, deacon and monk have a New Testament, and that he should read it daily. In an Encyclical, he called on pastors to perform the Holy Mysteries with reverence, with the fear of God, and love for one's neighbor. (An Explanation of Christian Duties was often republished in Moscow and Petersburg during the eighteenth century).

At Voronezh the saint eradicated an ancient pagan custom, the celebration in honor of Yarila (a pagan god associated with the fertility of grain and cattle). In the outlying districts where military units of the Don Cossacks were dispersed, he formed a missionary commission to restore sectarians to the Orthodox Church.

In 1765, Saint Tikhon transformed the Voronezh Slavic-Latin school into a seminary. He invited experienced instructors from Kiev and Kharkhov, and planned the courses for it. He exerted much attention and effort to build up both the churches and the school, and to guide pastors to understand the need for education.

The saint was unflagging in his efforts to administer the vast diocese, and he often spent nights without sleep. In 1767, poor health compelled him to give up running the diocese and withdraw for rest to the Tolshevsk monastery, at a distance 40 versts from Voronezh.

In 1769, the saint transferred to the monastery of the Theotokos in the city of Zadonsk. Having settled into this monastery, Saint Tikhon became a great teacher of the Christian life. With deep wisdom he set forth the ideal of true monasticism in his Rule of Monastic Living and his Guidance's to Turn from the Vanity of the World, and in his own life he fulfilled this ideal. He kept strictly to the precepts of the Church. Zealously (almost daily) he visited the temple of God, and he often sang and read in the choir. In time, out of humility, he altogether ceased participating and serving, but merely stood in the altar, reverently making the Sign of the Cross over himself. He loved to read the Lives of the Saints and the works of the holy Fathers. He knew The Psalter by heart, and he usually read or sang the Psalms on his journeys.

The saint underwent much tribulation because he had to leave his flock. When he recovered his health, he thought about returning to the Novgorod diocese, where Metropolitan Gabriel had invited him to head the Iveron Vallaik monastery. But when his cell-attendant mentioned this to the Elder Aaron, he declared: “Are you mad? The Mother of God does not direct him to move away from here.” The cell-attendant conveyed this to His Grace.

“If that is so,” said the saint “I shall not move away from here,” and he tore up the invitation. Sometimes he journeyed to the village of Lipovka, where he celebrated church services at the Bekhteev house. The saint journeyed also to the Tolshev monastery, which he loved for its solitude.

The fruition of all his spiritual life were the books that the saint wrote while in retirement: A SPIRITUAL TREASURY, GATHERED FROM THE WORLD (1770), and ON TRUE CHRISTIANITY (1776).

The saint lived in very simple circumstances: he slept on straw, covered by a sheepskin coat. His humility was so great that he paid no attention to the workers who laughed at him as he walked about the monastery, pretending that he did not hear it. He used to say, “It is pleasing to God that even the monastery workers mock me, and I deserve it because of my sins.” He often said, “Forgiveness is better than revenge.”

Once, a fool named Kamenev struck the saint on the cheek saying, “Don’t be so haughty” The saint, accepting this with gratitude, gave the fool three kopeks every day for the rest of his life.

All his life the saint “in troubles, and sorrows, and insults... joyfully endured, mindful that there can be no crown without the victory, nor victory without effort, nor effort without struggle, nor struggle without enemies” (Ode 6 of the Canon).

Strict towards himself, the saint was indulgent towards others. On the Friday before Palm Sunday, he entered the cell of his friend the schemamonk Metrophanes, and he saw him at table together with Cosmas Ignatievich, of whom he was also fond. There was fish on the table, and his friends became upset (Fish is not permitted during Lent, except for Feast days). The saint said, “Sit down, for I know you. Love is higher than fasting.” To further calm them, he ate some of their fish soup.

He especially loved the common folk, and comforted them in their grievous lot, interceding with the landowners, and moving them to compassion. He gave away his pension, and gifts from admirers, to the poor.

By his deeds of self-denial and love of soul, the saint advanced in contemplation of Heaven and foresaw the future. In 1778, he had a vision in his sleep: the Mother of God stood in the clouds, and near Her were the Apostles Peter and Paul. On bended knees, the saint prayed to the All-Pure Virgin for the peace of the whole world. The Apostle Paul loudly exclaimed: “When they shall say, peace and safety; then sudden destruction will come upon them” (I Thess. 5:3). The saint fell asleep in trembling and in tears. The following year, he again saw the Mother of God in the air and several people near Her. The saint knelt down, and near him four others in white garments also fell to their knees. The saint entreated the All-Pure Virgin for someone, that She would not leave him (the saint did not tell his cell-attendant who the four people were, nor for whom the request was made). She answered, “Let it be as you ask.”

Saint Tikhon prophesied much about the future, particularly the victory of Russia over the French in 1812. More than once they saw the saint in spiritual rapture, with a transformed and luminous face, but he forbade them to speak about this.

For three years before his repose he prayed each day, “Tell me, O Lord, of my end.” And a quiet voice in the morning dawn said, “It will be on a Sunday.” In that same year, he saw in a dream a beautiful meadow with

“Orthodox Church of the Mother of God: Joy of all the Sorrowful” founded in 1966

wondrous palaces upon it. He wanted to go inside, but they said to him: “In three years, you may enter. For now, continue your labors.” After this the saint secluded himself in his cell and admitted only a few friends.

Both clothing and a grave were prepared for the time of his death. He often came to weep over his coffin, while standing hidden from people in a closet. A year and three months before his death, in a vivid dream, it seemed to the saint that he was standing in the monastery church. A priest of his acquaintance was carrying the Divine Infant, covered with a veil, out of the altar through the Royal Doors. The saint approached and kissed the Infant on the right cheek, and he felt himself stricken on the left. Awakening, the saint sensed a numbness in his left cheek, his left leg, and a trembling in his left hand. He accepted this illness with joy.

Shortly before his death, the saint saw in a dream a high and twisting ladder and he heard a command to climb it. “At first, I was afraid because of weakness,” he told his friend Cosmas. “But when I started to go climb, the people standing around the ladder lifted me higher and higher, up to the very clouds.”

“The ladder,” said Cosmas, “is the way to the Heavenly Kingdom. Those who helped were those you have helped by your advice, and they remember you.” The saint said with tears, “I thought so, too. I feel that my end is near.” He frequently received the Holy Mysteries during his illness.

Saint Tikhon died, as was revealed to him, on Sunday August 13, 1783, at the age of fifty-nine. The first uncovering of his relics occurred on May 14, 1846.

Saint Tikhon’s glorification took place on Sunday August 13, 1861.



Bulletin Sponsor: Use the sign-up sheet at the candle stand for the health of, eternal memory of or a Pannikhida for a loved one or friend, for a donation of \$10. Sponsors will be remembered during Divine Liturgy for the day/week that you signed up for.

Memorial Candles: Candles be purchased at the candle stand, suggested donation of \$10 for a large one.

Private Confessions: Can be heard a half hour before any service. See Father Matthew for other times.

General Confession: Will be at 9:45 am on the first Sunday of the month.

Pannikhida Service: The third Sunday of each month there will be a Pannikhida after Divine Liturgy. If you would like your loved ones to be remembered please give a list of names to Father Matthew before that Sunday for those to be remembered in the month.

Special Announcements for the bulletin can be submitted by E-Mail:

OrthodoxChurchMotherOfGod@outlook.com ; reader.charles@hotmail.com or sub-deacon.vlashi@outlook.com

The Living Clean Group of Narcotics Anonymous meets every Friday from 8-9:15 pm downstairs in the community room.

The Grey Book Step Meeting Group of Narcotics Anonymous meets every Tuesday from 7-8:00 pm downstairs in the community room.



Orthodox Church of the Mother of God: Parish News

We will defer the Liturgical celebration of the Falling Asleep of the Holy Virgin Mary until next Sunday, August 20. Please be sure to bring flowers for Blessing then.

Holy Trinity Fall Discussion Series

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church invites you to join us for our Discussion Series to be held on the following dates this fall:

- September 20
- September 27
- October 04
- October 18

A series of topics will be led by Father George Liacopulos, Parish Priest. It is an open forum for questions and conversation. This year’s topics will be announced soon. Previous topics have included Coping with Stress and Depression, Raising Children in Today’s World, and Getting along with Parishioners and Co-Workers.

The discussions are open to Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike; visitors are welcome to join the Holy Trinity community. You may attend all sessions or as many as you wish.

We will meet on Wednesday evenings, from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. in Father George's reception room. We hope to see you there. If you have any further questions or would like more information, please contact Eugenia Kramvis, Outreach Coordinator, at ekramvis@comcast.net or 609 653-8092 ext. 5 or Father George, ext. 4.

We look forward to welcoming you.

With love in Christ,

Father George Liacopulos

Wisdom of the Church Fathers

"The earthly life is for us a continual Judgment of God. If we follow Christ's commandments, then the Grace of the Holy Spirit will come to us; but when we embark on them (even in small ways), God leaves us and we feel that abandonment about which outsiders do not even know. They do not understand what abandonment by God is".

**Elder Sophrony of Essex
(1896-1993)**



NY/NJ Diocese News

REGIONAL FOOD BANK

Twenty-six people from three area Orthodox parishes teamed up for a fun and productive volunteer time at the Regional Food Bank on Saturday, 8 July 2017. Participating were parishioners from Saint George Antiochian Church (Albany NY), Christ the Savior Church (Ballston Lake NY), and Saint Basil's Church (Watervliet NY) along with parish rector Archpriest Peter Olsen.

The team spent a hot summer morning sorting frozen food donated by area retailers and boxing it for the Food Bank to distribute to agencies who then serve those in need. Parishioner Marie Giokas commented, *"We hope to do this activity again in the near future!"*

Pastoral Changes:

Archpriest Ilya Gotlinsky, granted a four-month Medical Leave of Absence; Dormition of the Virgin Mary Church is being serviced by area clergy.

Priest Joseph Gall, released from the omophorion of His Eminence, Archbishop NIKON, and the Diocese of New England, and received by Archbishop Michael into the Diocese of New York and New Jersey, and assigned Assistant Pastor of the Chapel of the Transfiguration in Princeton, New Jersey, and Supply Priest for the New Jersey Deanery.



Orthodox Church in America (OCA) News

Beginners' on-line choral conducting course starts September 11

The Department of Liturgical Music and Translations once again will offer an on-line course, "Choral Conducting for Beginners." Classes are slated to begin September 11, 2017.

"Class sessions will be devoted to demonstrating basic conducting technique, beginning with elementary conducting patterns and concluding with an emphasis on conducting liturgical chant," said Prof. David Drillock, department Chair and course Instructor. "The course, which will consist of 12 sessions over a 13-week period, will be limited to 12 participants.

"The relationship between text and music, accented and non-accented syllables, will be emphasized in the first six sessions, and the practical exercises will be focused on learning the basic beat patterns," Prof. Drillock added. "The second half of the course will concentrate on techniques of conducting

chant, singing in phrases, analyzing specific examples of both metered and unmetered music, and preparing music for conducting.”

Class sessions will be posted at weekly intervals on the course web site.

“Once the session is posted on the web site, students may access the course at any time of the day,” Prof. Drillock explained. “The learner is expected to have completed the weekly assignments and be proficient in the conducting exercises by Friday of the week in which each session has been posted. The learner also should plan on spending at least one hour per day practicing the conducting exercises assigned in each session.”

Each learner is required to meet interactively with the instructor via Skype for a 30-minute session each week.

“These sessions provide an opportunity for each learner to demonstrate his or her comprehension of each session and the ability to perform the conducting exercises correctly,” Prof. Drillock continued. “At these interactive meetings, the learner will receive necessary feedback from the instructor together with helpful suggestions for improvement. Such one-on-one real time Skype sessions also will enable the instructor to provide extra help and answer specific questions.”

Following each Skype session, written evaluations will be provided to each participant.

Prof. Drillock is Professor Emeritus of Liturgical Music at Saint Vladimir’s Seminary, Yonkers, NY. Dr. Mark Pearson, who designed the on-line course format, will provide technical support and program assistance. He recently retired from Earlham College, where he was Instructional Technologist and Course Designer managing all aspects of the college’s Moodle Learning Management System.

Directions for submitting the course fee of \$225.00, made payable to the Orthodox Church in America, DLM, are included on the registration form. Registration will close on September 8.

Completed study materials for Fr. Hopko’s “The Orthodox Faith” series now available

The Orthodox Church in America’s Department of Christian Education [DCE] recently announced the release of the fourth and final set of questions and answers developed to accompany the late Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko’s series, *The Orthodox Faith*. The newly completed study materials amplify Father Thomas’ volume on Worship, according to Matushka Valerie Zahirsky, DCE Chair.

“As summer vacations end and fall approaches, many families will again be attending their home parishes regularly,” Matushka Valerie said. “The second volume—Worship—is especially useful for study with the beginning of the ecclesiastical year on September 1. It offers a close look at the Church’s liturgical services, especially the Divine Liturgy—the service parishioners experience most often.

“Each of the numbered 131 questions is keyed to the page of the Worship volume, while a separate document containing numbered answers also contains several points for reflection,” Matushka Valerie explained. “For all four volumes, the questions help readers review and reinforce their understanding of the material Father Thomas presents.”

Many parishes have been using the questions and answers for group study, Matushka Valerie added.

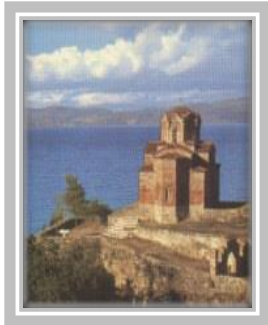
“They read through a chapter of the book together, then find the answers to the questions as a review, checking the answer document for accuracy, and discuss the points for reflection offered,” she noted. “Other groups begin reading with the questions in hand and find the answers as they go through the text. Readers using the books on their own can use the study materials in any way they find most beneficial. Teachers of older Church school students have used the materials to create ‘Jeopardy’ quizzes and other team activities.”

Among the questions answered in the latest release are

- Why do Orthodox couples not say the words “till death do us part” as part of the marriage service?
- Who wrote the hymn “Only Begotten Son”?
- What is the significance of the hot water added to the chalice for Holy Communion?
- What is the eighth day?
- Is there a difference between repentance and remorse?
- Is the use of incense based on anything in the Bible?

“The four revised volumes of *The Orthodox Faith*, with the accompanying study materials, provide an excellent means of learning and understanding all aspects of the teachings of the Orthodox Church,” Matushka Valerie emphasized.

Visit the DCE web site for a wealth of additional educational resources and study units for all ages on a wide variety of topics.



Prayers by the Laker, St. Velimirovich, XIX:

Amidst the racket and ridicule of people my prayer rises toward You, O my King and my Kingdom. Prayer is incense, that ceaselessly censures my soul and raises it toward You, and draws You toward her.

Stoop down, my King, so that I may whisper to You my most precious secret, my most secret prayer, my most prayer-ful desire. You are the object of all my prayers, all my search-ing. I seek nothing except You, truly, only You.

What could I seek from You, that would not separate me from You? Should I seek to be Lord over a few stars, instead of reigning as Lord with You over all the stars?

Should I seek to be first among men? How shameful it would be for me, when You would seat me at the last place at Your table!

Should I seek for millions of human mouths to praise me? How horrible it would be for me, when all those mouths are filled with earth.

Should I seek to be surrounded by the most precious ob-jects from the entire world? How humiliating it would be for me for those objects to outlast me and be glistening even as earthen darkness fills my eyes!

Should I seek for You not to separate me from my friends? Ah separate me, O Lord, separate me from my friends as soon as possible, because they are the thickest wall between You and me.

"Why should we pray," say my neighbors, "when God does not hear our prayers?" But I say to them: "Your prayer is not prayer, but peddling merchandise. You do not pray to God to give you God but Satan. Therefore, the Wisdom of heaven does not accept the prayers from your tongue."

"Why should we pray," grumble my neighbors, "when God knows what we need beforehand?" But I sadly answer them: "That is true, God knows--that you need nothing except Him alone. At the door of your soul He is waiting to come in. Through prayer the doors are opened for the entrance of the majestic King. Does not one of you say to the other at your door: 'Please enter'?"

"God does not seek glory for Himself but for you. All the worlds in the universe can add nothing to His glory, much less can you. Your prayer is a glorification of you, not of God. Fullness and mercy are to be found in Him. All the good words that you direct to Him in prayer, return to you twofold."

O my illustrious King and my God, to You alone I bow down and pray. Flood into me, as a raging stream into thirsty sand. Just flood me with Yourself, life-giving Water; then grass will easily grow in the sand and white lambs will graze in the grass.

Just flood into my parched soul, my Life and my Salvation.

300 Sayings of the Ascetics of the Orthodox Church, CXIX:

III. Us and Our Neighbors

When People Praise Us

When people begin to praise us, let us hurry to remember the multitude of our transgressions, and we will see that we are truly unworthy of that which they say and do in our honor.

St. John of the Ladder, Ladder, 22.42



The Morning Offering – Daily Inspiration by Abbott Tryphon

Choice

The liberty of choice is either to receive or reject God's love

Orthodox Christians believe there is nothing we can do to earn salvation. It is a gift from God and one that must be freely received by us. We are free to reject God because His offer to us is based on relationship and dependent upon our cooperation. God cannot force us to accept this relationship since our ultimate deification depends on our responding to the love that has been extended to us by our Creator. All true and loving relationships with God are based on free choice. The liberty of choice is either to receive or reject His love.

Vladimir Lossky wrote in his book *Orthodox Theology*, "God becomes powerless before human freedom; He cannot violate it since it flows from His own omnipotence. Certainly man was created by the will of God alone; but he cannot be deified [made Holy] by it alone. A single will for creation, but two for deification. A single will to raise

up the image, but two to make the image into a likeness. The love of God for man is so great that it cannot constrain; for there is no love without respect. Divine will always will submit itself to groping’s, to detours, even to revolts of human will to bring it to a free consent.”



Daily Reflection **Compassion Heals Resentments**



“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation (πάσης παρακλήσεως), who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any

affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ. If we are being afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation; if we are being consoled, it is for your consolation, experienced in patient endurance (ἐνεργουμένης ἐν ὑπομονῇ) of the same sufferings that we are also suffering.” (2 Cor 1: 3-6)

The “God of all consolation” connects all of us, with Him and with one another, through “com-passion,” through the shared experience of the Cross. Communion with Christ, the primary Cross-Carrier, in the grace or “consolation” of His Spirit, also brings us communion with one another, with other cross-carriers, through compassion.

Let me embrace this truth with all my heart this morning, because it is healing for the resentments I’ve been schlepping around, against fellow cross-carriers. If I’ve been wronged by others in some way, and if forgiveness has continued to elude me, let me try approaching it Christ’s way, through com-passion. The “others” are also on a journey, a cross-carrying journey, with burdens and setbacks and challenges, about which I probably don’t even know. Lord, send us all consolation and healing today, by the power of Your life-giving, liberating Cross. Amen!

Holy Orthodox Quotes

“Silence is the cross on which we must crucify our ego.”

- St. Seraphim of Sarov

Ancient Christian Wisdom

“And so let us be glad and bear with patience everything the world throws at us, secure in the knowledge that it is then that we are most in the mind of God.”

- St. Basil the Great

Through the Grace of God – Orthodox Christianity

St John Chrysostom: Spiritual Fruits

“Look at the trees of the forest, see how sturdy and beautiful they are, how tall they grow, and how smooth is their bark. Yet when we plant a garden, we prefer other kinds of trees, such as pomegranate and olive trees. This is because we want trees that bear fruit. We are the trees which God has planted in His garden. He is not concerned at how sturdy and beautiful we are, at how tall we grow, or at how smooth our skin is. As trees in His garden, He is concerned only that we bear fruit; and the fruit which He wants us to bear is spiritual: peace and love, faith and gentleness, patience and self- control, generosity and loyalty. Think again of the trees of the forest; from time to time we go and cut down one of those trees to provide wood for building and houses and fuel for our fire. If we so not bear fruit, God will cut us down and cast us on the fire. He planted us on this earth not for our own sakes, but for His glory; we can only glorify Him by the spiritual fruits that grow in our souls.”

Reflections in Christ
Transfiguration: Cultivating the Image of Divine Beauty
Fr. Steven Kostoff

Last Sunday—August 6—we celebrated the [Great Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord](#), which we will continue to celebrate through Sunday 13, the Leavetaking of the Feast. The mysterious presence of Beauty is revealed on Mount Tabor in an overwhelming manner as Christ is transfigured, resplendent in divine glory. This is the beauty of the first-formed human creatures, created to reflect the beauty of the divine nature, for by grace they—and we—were created in the image and likeness of God. And they were placed in a world that also reflected this divine beauty. That is why God, after completing the creation process, declared that it was all “very good.”

Yet, the presence of sin marred that beauty. This lost beauty was restored to humanity when the Son of God assumed our human nature, uniting it to His divine Person and revealing the glory of God in a human being. Thus, on Mount Tabor, Christ reveals the beauty of His divine nature and the beauty of our created human nature. This is why the Transfiguration is often referred to as a “Feast of Beauty.”

The Russian novelist Dostoevsky [+1881] famously and somewhat enigmatically once said, “Beauty will save the world.” Yet, Dostoevsky also realized that in a world filled with sin, beauty can evoke responses that fall short of any saving value. In fact, beauty can even degenerate toward sin and sensuality, as one of Dostoevsky’s greatest creations, Dmitri Karamazov, acknowledged with great anguish. Therefore, for Dostoevsky beauty itself had to be “saved” and linked to Truth and Goodness. Thus, for the Russian novelist, beauty is not simply an aesthetic concept, but one that must have a moral, ethical and spiritual dimension for it to be rightly perceived and experienced. And for Dostoevsky—as well as for not only great artists, but for the great minds of the Church—beauty is not an abstract concept or Idea. Beauty is a Person, and this Person is Christ. In Christ, Truth, Goodness and Beauty are harmoniously united. This is why Dostoevsky also spoke of the “radiant image of Christ.”

In another famous passage from his pen, found in one of his letters, Dostoevsky articulated his personal “creed” as he writes, “I have constructed for myself a symbol of faith in which everything is clear and holy for me. The symbol is very clear, here it is: to believe that there is nothing more beautiful, more profound, more sympathetic, more reasonable, more courageous and more perfect than Christ, and not only is there nothing, but I tell myself with jealous love that never could there be.”

It is these qualities that make Christ such an attractive figure that a well-disposed mind and heart not unduly influenced by the marks of a fallen world will almost naturally turn to as an “ideal,” but again as a concrete living Person. There is a passage from the personal diary of Father Alexander Elchaninov [+1934] that captures that same intuition as found in Dostoevsky: “It is impossible not to love Christ. If we saw Him now, we should not be able to take our eyes off Him, we should ‘listen to Him in rapture;’ we should flock round Him as did the multitudes in the Gospels. All that is required of us is not to resist. We have only to yield to Him, to the contemplation of His image—in the Gospels, in the saints, in the Church—and He will take possession of our hearts.”

Here, again, there is an inherent moral, ethical and spiritual dimension from that beauty that flows outward from Christ. This is rendered in the form of very practical and concrete advice in the words of Vladimir Solovyov [+1900], for many the greatest Russian philosopher known to us: “Before any important decision, let us evoke in our soul the image of Christ. Let us concentrate our attention upon it and ask ourselves: Would He Himself do this action? Or, in other words: Will He approve of it or not? To all I propose this rule: it does not deceive. In every dubious case, as soon as the possibility of a choice is offered to you, remember Christ. Picture to yourself His living Person, as it really is, and entrust Him with the burden of your doubts. Let men of good will, as individuals, as social factors, as leaders of men and peoples, apply this criterion, and they will really be able, in the name of truth, to show to others the way toward God.”

This concreteness is all the more interesting, for Solovyov was often a highly speculative thinker. That which he wrote just over a century ago is hardly a public ideal any longer—to our great loss. It is our role to maintain and cultivate the image of divine beauty in our lives as seen in the face of the incarnate and transfigured Christ as a sacred obligation.