

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: Trudy Ellmore

Parish Council Vice President: Holly Dawson



Sunday, September 6, 2015

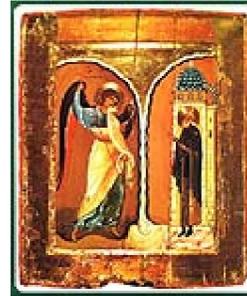
Gospel: Matthew 21:33-42

Tone 5

Epistle: II Corinthians 1:21-2:4

14th Sunday after Pentecost; Commemoration of the Miracle of the Archangel Michael at Colossae

*Glory to
Jesus Christ!*



*Glory
Forever!*

*Commemoration of the
Miracle of the Archangel
Michael at Colossae*

*Michael, commander of God's armies / and minister of the divine glory,
prince of the bodiless angels and guide of mankind,
ask for what is good for us, and for great mercy,
as supreme commander of the Bodiless Hosts.*

Today the Church Remembers

14th Sunday After Pentecost — Tone 5. Commemoration of the Miracle of the Archangel Michael at Colossæ. Martyrs Eudoxius, Zeno, and Macarius (311-312). St. Archippus (Arkhipp) of Herapolis. Martyr Romulus, and with him many others (107-115). Hieromartyr Cyril, Bishop of Gortyna (3rd-4th c.). Martyrs Cyriacus, Faustus the Presbyter, Abibas the Deacon, and 11 others, at Alexandria (ca. 250). St. David of Hermopolis in Egypt (4th c.). Hieromartyr Priest Maksym Sandowicz of Carpatho-Rus' (1914).

Weekly Bulletin Sponsors

For Health of:

Johnathan Dawson, on his 40th birthday offered by his parents Holly & Ed Dawson..

Kira Dangle on her birthday, offered by her parents Father Matthew & Matushka Barbara.

Julian, on his 4th birthday, offered by his parents and grandparents.

Liturgical Schedule:

Sunday, September 6th

9:40 am: Hours
9:45 am: General Confession
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Saturday, September 12th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, September 13th

9:40 am: Hours
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Saturday, September 19th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, September 20th

9:30 am: Sunday School
9:40 am: Hours
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Readings:

Epistle: II Corinthians 1:21-2:4

Brethren, it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has commissioned us; he has put his seal upon us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. But I call God to witness against me--it was to spare you that I refrained from coming to Corinth. Not that we lord it over your faith; we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith.

For I made up my mind not to make you another painful visit. For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice, for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all. For I wrote you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.

Gospel: Matthew 22:1-14

The Lord said this parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a

marriage feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the marriage feast; but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, Behold, I have made ready my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves are killed, and everything is ready; come to the marriage feast.' But they made light of it and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find.' And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment; and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen."





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 and \$2 for a small one.

Private Confessions: Can be heard a half hour before any service. See Father Matthew for other times and **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:
Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org

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

SPECIAL PARISH MEETING: On Sunday, September 27th, following the Coffee Hour there will be a parish meeting to approve minor changes to the Amendment to the Parish Corporation Papers which will update their content. Please attend this very important meeting. Council meeting will be following the Special meeting.

SUNDAY SCHOOL WILL BEGIN ON SEPTEMBER 20TH. THERE ARE SIGN-UP SHEETS AT THE CANDLE STAND.

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

“Facing Forward” Part 1: Practical Principles of Orthodox Evangelization by Joseph Kormos

In light of the theme of the 18th All-American Council—“How to Expand the Mission”—questions have been raised anew with regard to evangelization, mission, and growth. Is evangelization “Orthodox?” When, how and why should we go about sharing “the hope that is in us” with others? What should be our proper motivation in doing so? How should we view the mandate to “go forth” from a personal and parish-wide perspective?

In an attempt to at least explore these questions, we turned to a variety of OCA documents, primarily the Study Papers issued in conjunction with the past All-American Councils that

focused on evangelization, mission and Church growth. In the process, we discovered and extracted “practical principles” contained in those valuable documents. Some are overarching guidelines. Others approach a set of practices. While the content of this two-part article has been reviewed at various times by a variety of OCA clergy associated with evangelization, mission, growth and parish development, we claim no particular endorsement by others. Certainly no clear consensus exists. So we ask our readers to consider these articles, not as perfect or even complete, but hopefully as a useful collection and starting point for further discussion about practical approaches for proclaiming the Gospel to those who would receive it.

1. Evangelization IS Orthodox. We who claim to hold the apostolic faith and who are disciples of Saints Cyril and Methodius, Herman and Innocent, Nina of Georgia and Nicholas of

Japan, and countless other evangelizers cannot say that mission and evangelization are not central to the Orthodox Christian Tradition. Evangelization – the act of spreading the Gospel—is not a “Protestant” concept.

2. Evangelization is everybody’s “job.” Far from being the exclusive ministry of the clergy, evangelization is the calling of every Orthodox Christian. Just as the Holy Spirit equipped the apostles to proclaim the risen Saviour, the members of the Body of Christ – clergy and laity alike – have been equipped with gifts and functions by which the Gospel might be proclaimed.

The attitude that says “God does not need me to make His Kingdom grow” is, simply stated, wrong. We are all called to work with Christ to reach others. All those who hear and embrace the Gospel are expected to proclaim it. Just as faith, hope and charity are virtues to which every Christian strives, the responsibility for proclaiming the Gospel belongs to every Orthodox Christian.

Evangelization cannot be relegated to “clergy specialists,” like repairing a roof. Much of the day-to-day ministry of evangelization can—and should—be done by the laity. The laity are more numerous than the clergy. And laypersons usually have more contact with the unchurched—those who have yet to hear the Gospel—through work, schools and civic organizations.

3. Evangelization is not “optional.” Ultimately, Christ’s death and resurrection were public events, publicly proclaimed. We cannot separate the personal Christ from His resurrection – and we cannot separate our faith in and experience of the risen Christ from our calling to proclaim His resurrection “to the ends of the earth.” Faith in the risen Christ is reduced to a mere intellectual exercise if we fail to share it with those who have yet to discover and experience it. The Good News is not “our little secret.” If one actually has a personal experience of the beauty and goodness of God, he or she will want to share it.

4. Evangelism requires collective and personal effort and commitment. Evangelization is not something that a parish “does.” It is most effective when each Christian embraces his or her part in responding to God’s desire to bring all to salvation. Likewise, without the concerted effort by the parish community as a whole, the effectiveness of personal efforts surely will be diminished. It takes both dimensions to work in tandem for Orthodox Christian evangelization to become effective.

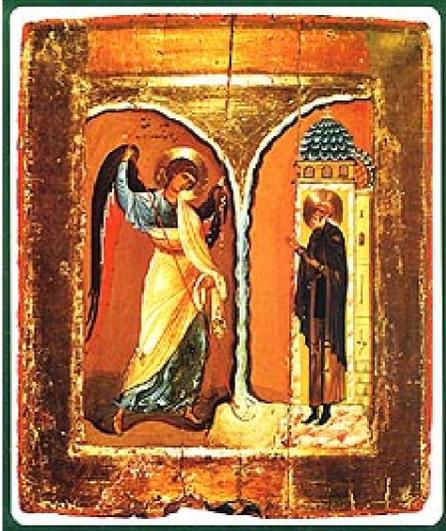
5. Our parish is not a closed community. Each parish is a local Church of God. Too often we see the parish as a closed community that keeps to itself and does not actively seek or welcome new members. The Church is not just for “our people,” but “for all mankind.”

6. Evangelization is more than planning. Just as the Church is not a “business,” evangelization is not a “marketing strategy” complete with “targets” and endless “good plans.” Unless everyone involved is committed to personal growth in Christ—and seriously accepts his or her responsibility for bringing the Gospel to others—there is no chance that they will succeed in helping a parish to grow. And if the understanding of evangelization is merely to “bring in new people” to help “increase income” or pay for the new hall, it is wrong-spirited and surely will not succeed.

7. Finding those who’ve moved to the suburbs is not evangelization. Mission parishes sometimes form without pursuing a real mission, other than to serve current Orthodox Christians who have moved to another area. Many parishes claim to grow when, in reality, they are merely enrolling transferees from other communities. Important as it is to serve those who already belong to the Church but who may not be in a position to do so due to distance or related factors, evangelization primarily aims at reaching the unchurched and those who have fallen away.

(to be continued in next week’s bulletin)

Commemoration of the Miracle of the Archangel Michael at Colossae



The Miracle of the Holy Chief Commander Archangel Michael at Colossae. In Phrygia, not far from the city of Hieropolis, in a place called Cheretopos, there was a church named for the Archangel Michael, built over a miraculous spring.

This church was built by a certain inhabitant of the city of Laodicia in gratitude to God for healing his mute daughter. The holy Chief Commander Michael appeared to this man in a dream and revealed to him that his daughter would receive the gift of speech after drinking from the water of the spring. The girl actually did receive healing and began to speak. After this miracle, the father and his daughter and all their family were baptized. In fervent gratitude, the father built the church in honor of the holy Chief Commander Michael. Not only did Christians begin to come to the spring for healing, but also pagans. In so doing, many of the pagans turned from their idols and were converted to the faith in Christ.

At this church of the holy Chief Commander Michael, a certain pious man by the name of Archippus served for sixty years as church custodian. By his preaching and by the example of his saintly life he brought many pagans to faith in Christ. With the general malice of that time towards Christians, and especially against

Archippus, the pagans thought to destroy the church in order to prevent people from coming to that holy place of healing, and at the same time kill Archippus.

Toward this end they made a confluence of the Lykokaperos and Kufos Rivers and directed its combined flow against the church. St Archippus prayed fervently to the Chief Commander Michael to ward off the danger. Through his prayer the Archangel Michael appeared at the temple, and with a blow of his staff, opened a wide fissure in a rock and commanded the rushing torrents of water to flow into it. The temple remained unharmed. Seeing such an awesome miracle, the pagans fled in terror. Archippus and the Christians gathered in church glorified God and gave thanks to the holy Archangel Michael for the help. The place where the rivers plunged into the fissure received the name “Chonae”, which means “plunging.”

The Chudov (“of the Miracle”) monastery in Moscow is named for this Feast.

Prayers by the Lake, St. Nikolai Velimirovich, XXI:

O heavenly Mother, receive me into Your glory. For when worldly glory is overtaken by darkness, it never dawns. And the crown that men bestow is always a crown of thorns for those who are rational and a madman's cap for those who are irrational. While gold is in the ground everyone likes it and searches for it. After it is set as a crown on a man's head, the darkness of envy and animosity blinds its radiance.

Turn me into hidden gold in Your most hidden treasury, so that no one may know about me except You. For as long as You know me I am known. As long as only people know me, my name is doubt.

Hide me from the evil eyes of the world, for they infuriate me. Keep me like a secret, that envy cannot detect. Be wiser than I, and reveal me to no one. Indeed, I used to have You like a most

precious secret, and I revealed You to the world, and the world ridiculed me. For envy ridicules, when it cannot take away what it envies.

My friends, why do you partake of human glory to the point of intoxication, a glory that begins with song and ends with lying in the mire?

My friends, all the mouths that are singing your praises now know yet another, opposite song, that you will hear later.

Flee from the glory that resembles a tower built on the back of a whale, lest both enemies and friends laugh at you from the shore.

The unanimous glory that comes from men is the most inglorious, because it is indifferent.

If your glory is a reward from the people, then you are a day laborer who has been paid off, and tomorrow the people can throw you off their fields.

Truly, no new day recognizes your contract with a day gone by. Every day opens a new field and makes a new agreement.

If your glory is the work of your mighty arms, your days will be anger and your nights will be fear.

If your glory is the work of your wisdom, wisdom will be a castration of your glory and you will be unable to move.

If you call your glory your own, Heaven will punish you for lying and stealing.

Stroll with your glory through a cemetery and see whether the dead will glorify you.

In truth, you are already strolling through a cemetery, and you are receiving glory from mobile tombs. Who will glorify you, after the mobile tombs become immobile?

You will become very sad in the other world, when you hear what those who have been glorifying you in this world really think of you. O heavenly Mother, hide me far from the eyes of men and the tongues of men. Hide me where only Your eye penetrates and only Your word is heard.

I beseech You, my Eternal Beauty!

Sayings of the Ascetics of the Orthodox Church, XX

Those Who Have Known God

When the soul knows the love of God by the Holy Spirit, then he clearly feels that the Lord is our own Father, the closest, dearest Father, the best. And there is not greater happiness that to love God with all the mind and heart, and our neighbor as ourself. And when this love is in the soul, then all things bring joy to the soul.

St. Silouan the Athonite, Writings, IX.15

The Prologue of Ohrid

St. Nikolai Velimirovic

Reflection

Christianity has uprooted many barbaric customs from the society of man. But some of those customs-praiseworthy from the pagan point of view, but shameful from the Christian point of view-are, even to the present day, like hidden corruption oozing from a supposedly healed wound. One of these customs is the unlawful kidnapping of maidens. St. Basil wrote powerfully to one of his priests, after one such incident: "Do all in your power to find and rescue this maiden. Then, return her to her parents and excommunicate the perpetrator. Also suspend those who abetted him-including their entire households-from participation in services for three years. Likewise, suspend everyone in the village to which the maiden was taken, where she was hidden or perhaps kept by force-so that all will know that a kidnapper should be driven away from them like a serpent or some other wild beast or common enemy, and that the abused should be protected."

Contemplation

Contemplate the example of David's self-restraint (II Samuel 23):

1. How, during battle against the Philistines, David became thirsty, and asked who would bring him water from the well in Bethlehem, which was held by the Philistines;
2. How three heroes slipped through the enemy lines, and brought water back to their king;
3. How David did not want to drink, but rather poured the water on the ground, saying: Is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?

**Homily:
on the two births**

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3:6).

Brethren, these words are not the words of a prophet or an apostle, but are the words of the Lord Himself, uttered with His most pure mouth. As there is power and salvation in every one of the Lord's words, so is there power and salvation in these. That is why it is necessary to study these words with fear and great care and apply them in our lives. By these words the Lord emphasizes the precedence of the spirit over the flesh. And, as the flesh is born of the body, so the spirit must be born of the Spirit. The birth of our spirit is of the Spirit of God, according to the grace of God and not according to nature. It is the new birth that the Lord described to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. Nicodemus did not understand these words of Christ, just as, even today, he whose flesh is stronger than his spirit does not understand them. Men whose flesh has overcome their spirit think and judge everything according to the body. Men whose spirit has overcome their body think and judge everything according to the spirit. All those who think and judge according to the body make their spirits fleshly, while all who think and judge spiritually make their bodies spiritual. Just like someone exchanging gold for paper money, the former convert that which is immortal into that which is mortal. The latter are like someone exchanging paper money for pure gold—for they do not destroy that which is immortal, but convert that which is mortal into that which is immortal. The Jews interpreted the Law and the

Prophets according to the flesh, and that is why they did not understand the Lord Jesus, but crucified the Lord of Glory. Those who were enlightened by the grace of the Spirit of God interpreted both the Law and the Prophets spiritually, and understood our Lord Jesus Christ. And through Him, they understood not only the Law and the Prophets, but all of created nature as well, and all of their life on earth. Brethren, although the body is necessarily born of the flesh, it would be unnatural for the spirit also to be born of the flesh. Let our spirit be born of the Spirit of God and then we will be natural, both in body and in spirit. This is that higher and sinless nature that Adam had in Paradise before he sinned. It is not possible or necessary for our body to be born again of the flesh. It is possible and necessary, and never too late, for our spirit to be born again of the Spirit of God.

O Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God—help us, that before death we may become reborn of the Spirit of God, and that our spirits, in truth, be born of the Spirit.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

***Thoughts for Each Day of the Year
According to the Daily Church
Readings from the Word of God
By St. Theophan the Recluse***

A king arranges a wedding for his son, he sends once for those who were bidden, sends twice, but because of earthly cares they do not come—one was busy at home, another with business. A new invitation was made in other spheres, and the wedding chamber was furnished with guests. Among them was found one not dressed for a wedding, who was therefore cast out. The meaning of this parable is clear: The wedding is the kingdom of heaven, the invitation is the preaching of the Gospels, those who refused are those who did not believe at all, and the one who was not dressed for a wedding believed, but did not live according to faith. Each of us must figure out for ourselves which category we belong to. That we are bidden is clear, but are we believers? Indeed it is possible to even be among believers, under their common name, and

completely lack faith. One does not think at all about faith, as if it did not exist; another knows something or other about it and from it, and is satisfied; another interprets the faith in a distorted way; another relates to it with complete animosity. All are reckoned to be among the Christians, although they have absolutely nothing which is Christian. If you believe, figure out whether your feelings, or deeds conform to your faith—these are the garment of the soul, by which God sees you as dressed for the wedding or not. It is possible to know the faith well and be zealous for it, but in actual life to serve the passions, to dress, that is, in the shameful clothes of a sin-loving soul. Such people are one way in word, but are another way in the heart. On their tongue is, “Lord, Lord!” but within they are saying, “count me out.” (Examine yourself, whether you be in the faith and wearing the wedding clothes of the virtues, or wearing the shameful tatters of sins and passions.

Being Honest

The importance of honesty in discovering God for oneself

As I approach my seventieth birthday find myself spending an increasing amount of time on area campuses, and hosting a growing numbers of young people making pilgrimages to the monastery. At an age when many of my contemporaries are grandfathers, or even great grandfathers, I've discovered the truth of something I read about while still a college student. Grandparents are often more sympathetic to the burdens and challenges that young people face than their own parents. Age seems to mellow us out and make us more sympathetic to the challenges young people face. We become less judgmental because we've been down the same road and know that, in the end, these young people will come out just fine. Most young people struggle with questions about things eternal, and even whether God exists. It is part of relationship building. My own undergraduate days were filled with anxiety about what the future might bring, and fearful of making decisions that would negatively impact my future. In my own struggles with truth, as a young man, I even found myself embracing

atheism. Because of this, I understand the issues facing young people today. Yet I know the God revealed in Jesus Christ, the One Whom I've personally encountered, is not the same god I rejected in my youth.

If we are to have a personal relationship with God we must be open and honest and unafraid to question. The Lord wants us to be real with Him. Like the sound relationship that one sees in a long and successful marriage, a relationship with God must first and foremost be based in honesty and truth. Love and trust come with time and experience. Our relationship with God is something that builds over time, and like all true relationships, results in an embrace of love and peace.

It is this peace and joy that I want to impart to young people. My personal relationship with Christ is something that I want to share, and not just with Orthodox youth may make a pilgrimage to the monastery. I KNOW God exists because I've experienced His great love in a personal way, and it is this certainty of the reality of God that leads me to reach out to the college students, and faculty, of the Puget Sound's area colleges and universities. They, like me, need to discover God for themselves, and build upon a relationship that began with their conception.

With love in Christ,
Abbot Tryphon

