

FC RC NPKA SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America
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GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST! GLORY TO HIM FOREVER!

December 14, 2014	28 th Sunday after Pentecost	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am
	Sunday of the Forefathers of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ		
December 20	Saturday	Great Vespers	4:00 pm
December 21	28 th Sunday after Pentecost	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am

On the 20th and 21st of December, (next weekend), our parish will be blessed with an archpastoral visit from our bishop, MICHAEL of New York and New Jersey. His Grace will be with us for Saturday evening Vespers and Sunday Divine Liturgy, and Coffee Hour.

Saints of the Day: Martyrs Thyrsus, Leucius and Callinicus of Apollonia (250). Martyrs Apollonius, Philemon, Arianus and Theoctychus of Alexandria (ca. 305). New Hieromartyr Priest Nicholas (1937). Saint Bassian the Confessor, Archbishop of Tambov (1940). Sainted Ilarion, Metropolitan of Suzdal' and Yur'ev (1707). Saint Venatius Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers (7 c), Venerable Hygbald, Abbot in Lincolnshire (7 c). Saints Fingar and Phila, brother and sister, Martyrs in Cornwall. Venerable Daniel the Hesychast of Voronezh (17 c). Four guards converted by Saint Arianus and Martyred. Saint Folciunus, Bishop of Tervas (855).

Please remember in your prayers: Suffering Christians of Egypt, Syria, the Middle East and Ukraine. Bishop BOULOS Yazigi, Bishop YOHANNA Ibrahim, of Aleppo. Archimandrites Athanasy, Nectarios, Pachomy. Archpriests Alvian, Eugene, Leonid, John, Jason, John, Vincent. Priests Jacobus, Leonid, Vasil, Vasil. Deacons Mark, Demetrios, Philip. Mother Raphaela, Dimitri, Nina, Daniel, Catherine, Helen, Anna, Peter, Helen, Michael, Stephanie, Zara, Nolan, Emelie, Michael, Ed, Nettie, Maria, Michael, John, James, Nancy, Susan, Daniel, Aaron, Mark, Jennifer, Nina, Nadine, Michael, Anna, Gregory, Marianna, Mykola, Helen, Isaiah, Jamie, Albert, Kevin, Robert, Robert, Andrew, David, Warren, Vincent, Diane, Abigail.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Drew Dudek and Bishop Seraphim were offered today at Liturgy and Moleben at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of Esther Kappanadze, Joseph Udics, Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemann and Archbishop Kiprian were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Father John U.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the souls of Anna Rinko, Glen W. Cooley, Walter Jovorosky, Jr., and Walter Jovorosky, Sr. *were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of the "Memory Eternal Requiem Service Fund."

STEWARDSHIP II. 10. What then can we say to an ingenious man, who has lately made a discovery, that disembodied spirits have not only no senses (not even sight or hearing,) but no memory or understanding; no thought or perception; not so much as a consciousness of their own existence! That they are in a dead sleep from death to the resurrection! Consanguineus lethi sopor (Sleep is the cousin of death) indeed! Such a sleep we may call "a near kinsman of death," if it be not the same thing. What can we say, but that ingenious men have strange dreams; and these they sometimes mistake for realities?

11. But to return. As the soul will retain its understanding and memory, notwithstanding the dissolution of the body, so undoubtedly the will, including all the affections, will remain in its full vigour. If our love or anger, our hope or desire, perish, it is only with regard to those whom we leave behind. To them it matters not, whether they were the objects of our love or hate, of our desire or aversion. But in separate spirits themselves we have no reason to believe that any of these are extinguished. It is more probable, that they work with far greater force, than while the soul was clogged with flesh and blood.

12. But although all these, although both our knowledge and senses, our memory and understanding, together with our will, our love, hate, and all our affections, remain after the body is dropped off; yet, in this respect, they are as though they were not -- we are no longer stewards of them. The things continue, but our stewardship does not: We no more act in that capacity. Even the grace which was formerly entrusted with us, in order to enable us to be faithful and wise stewards, is now no longer entrusted for that purpose. The days of our stewardship are ended.

STEWARDSHIP III. It now remains, that, being no longer stewards, we give an account of our stewardship. Some have imagined, this is to be done immediately after death, as soon as we enter into the world of spirits. Nay, the Church of Rome does absolutely assert this; yea, makes it an article of faith. And thus much we may allow, the moment a soul drops the body, and stands naked before God, it cannot but know what its portion will

be to all eternity. It will have full in its view, either everlasting joy, or everlasting torment; as it is no longer possible to be deceived in the judgment which we pass upon ourselves. But the Scripture gives us no reason to believe, that God will then sit in judgment upon us. There is no passage in all the oracles of God which affirms any such thing. That which has been frequently alleged for this purpose seems rather to prove the contrary; namely (Heb. 9:27) "It is appointed for men once to die, and after this the judgment:" For, in all reason, the word "once" is here to be applied to judgment as well as death. So that the fair inference to be drawn from this very text is, not that there are two judgments, a particular and a general; but that we are to be judged, as well as to die, once only: Not once immediately after death, and again after the general resurrection; but then only "when the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all His holy angels with Him." The imagination therefore of one judgment at death, and another at the end of the world, can have no place with those who make the written Word of God the whole and sole standard of their faith.

2. The time then when we are to give this account is, when the "great white throne comes down from heaven, and he that sitteth thereon, from whose face the heavens and the earth flee away, and there is found no place for them." It is then "the dead, small and great, will stand before God; and the books will be opened:" -- The book of Scripture, to them who were entrusted therewith; the book of conscience to all mankind. The "book of remembrance," likewise (to use another scriptural expression,) which had been writing from the foundation of the world, will then be laid open to the view of all the children of men. Before all these, even the whole human race, before the devil and his angels, before an innumerable company of holy angels, and before God the Judge of all, thou wilt appear, without any shelter or covering, without any possibility of disguise, to give a particular account of the manner wherein thou hast employed all thy Lord's goods!

3. The Judge of all will then inquire, "How didst thou employ thy soul? I entrusted thee with an immortal spirit, endowed with various powers and faculties, with understanding, imagination, memory, will, affections. I gave thee withal full and express directions, how all these were to be employed. Didst thou employ thy understanding, as far as it was capable, according to those directions; namely, in the knowledge of thyself and me -- my nature, my attributes? -- my works, whether of creation, of providence, or of grace? -- in acquainting thyself with my word? -- in using every means to increase thy knowledge thereof? -- in meditating thereon day and night? Didst thou employ thy memory, according to my will, in treasuring up whatever knowledge thou hadst acquired, which might conduce to my glory, to thy own salvation, or the advantage of others? Didst thou store up therein, not things of no value, but whatever instruction thou hadst learned from my word; and whatever experience thou hadst gained of my wisdom, truth, power, and mercy? Was thy imagination employed, not in painting vain images, much less such as nourished "foolish and hurtful desires;" but in representing to thee whatever would profit thy soul, and awaken thy pursuit of wisdom and holiness? Didst thou follow my directions with regard to thy will? Was it wholly given up to me? Was it swallowed up in mine, so as never to oppose, but always run parallel with it? Were thy affections placed and regulated in such a manner, as I appointed in my word? Didst thou give me thy heart? Didst thou not love the world, neither the things of the world? Was I the object of thy love? Was all thy desire unto me, and unto the remembrance of my name? Was I the joy of thy heart, the delight of thy soul, the chief among ten thousand? Didst thou sorrow for nothing, but what grieved my spirit? Didst thou fear and hate nothing but sin? Did the whole stream of thy affections flow back to the ocean from whence they came? Were thy thoughts employed according to my will -- not in ranging to the ends of the earth, not on folly, or sin; but on 'whatsoever things were pure, whatsoever things were holy;' on whatsoever was conducive to my glory, and to 'peace and good-will among men?'"

4. Thy Lord will then inquire, "How didst thou employ the body wherewith I entrusted thee? I gave thee a tongue to praise me therewith: Didst thou use it to the end for which it was given? Didst thou employ it, not in evil speaking or idle speaking, not in uncharitable or unprofitable conversation; but in such as was good, as was necessary or useful either to thyself or others? Such as always tended, directly or indirectly, to 'minister grace to the hearers?' I gave thee, together with thy other senses, those grand avenues of knowledge, sight, and hearing: were these employed to those excellent purposes for which they were bestowed upon thee? In bringing thee in more and more instruction in righteousness and true holiness? I gave thee hands and feet, and various members, wherewith to perform the works which were prepared for thee: were they employed, not in doing 'the will of the flesh,' of thy evil nature; or the will of the mind; (the things to which thy reason or fancy led thee;) but 'the will of Him that sent' thee into the world, merely to work out thy own salvation? Didst thou present all thy members, not to sin, as instruments of unrighteousness, but to me alone, through the Son of my love, 'as instruments of righteousness?'"

5. The Lord of all will next inquire, "How didst thou employ the worldly goods which I lodged in thy hands? Didst thou use thy food, not so as to seek or place thy happiness therein, but so as to preserve thy body in health, in strength and vigour, a fit instrument for the soul? Didst thou use apparel, not to nourish pride or vanity, much less to tempt others to sin, but conveniently and decently to defend thyself from the injuries of the weather? Didst thou prepare and use thy house, and all other conveniences, with a single eye to my glory -- in every point seeking not thy own honour, but mine; studying to please, not thyself, but me? Once more: in what manner didst thou employ that comprehensive talent, money? -- not in gratifying the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life; not squandering it away in vain expenses -- the same as throwing it into the sea; not hoarding it up to leave behind thee -- the same as burying it in the earth; but first supplying thy own reasonable wants, together with those of thy family; then restoring the remainder to me, through the poor, whom I had appointed to receive it; looking upon thyself as only one of that number of poor, whose wants were to be supplied out of that part of my substance which I had placed in thy hands for this purpose; leaving thee the right of being supplied first, and the blessedness of giving rather than receiving? Wast thou accordingly a general benefactor to mankind? Feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, comforting the sick, assisting the stranger, relieving the afflicted, according to their various necessities? Wast thou eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, a father to the fatherless, and an husband to the widow? And didst thou labour to improve all outward works of mercy, as means of saving souls from death?"