

IC XC NIKA SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America
305 Main Road, Herkimer, New York, 13350 • 315-866-3272
Archpriest John Udics, Rector • e-mail: john.udics@gmail.com
Deacon Demetrios Richards • e-mail: dwr00nhr@twcny.rr.com
Parish Web Page: www.cnyorthodoxchurch.org

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Glory to God for all things!

March 1, 2015	Sunday of Orthodoxy		Divine Liturgy	9:30 am
March 4	Wednesday	Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts	6:00 pm	
March 6	Friday	Akathist to the Mother of God	6:00 pm	
March 7	Saturday	Soul Saturday	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am
	Saturday		Great Vespers	4:00 pm
March 8	Sunday of Saint Gregory Palamas		Divine Liturgy	9:30 am

Saints of the Day: Martyr Eudocia of Heliopolis (152). New Hieromartyr Olga (1937). New Hieromartyrs Priests Basil, Peter, John, Benjamin, Michael, New Hieromartyr Anthony, Virgin-martyrs Anna, Daria, Eudokia, Alexandra, Martyr Basil, Virgin-martyr Nadezhda (1938). New Hieromartyr Priest Alexander (1942). New Hieromartyr Priest Basil (1943). New Hieromartyrs Abbess Antonina of Kizliar (1924), Methodius (1920) and Anastasia Andreyevna, Fool-for-Christ. Venerable Martyrius, Abbot of Zelenets (1603). Martyrs Nestor, Tribimius, Marcellus, and Anthony of Perge in Pamphylia (3 c.). Martyr Antonina of Nicaea in Bithynia (284-305). Venerable Domnina of Syria (460). Venerable Agapius of Vatopedi Skete of Kolitsou, Mount Athos and his four companions. Venerable Swidbert (713). Saint David of Wales, Bishop (6 c.) Saint Albinus, Bishop of Angers (550). Saint Leo-Luke of Corleone, Sicily (900). New Martyr Paraskevas of Trebizond (1659). Martyrs Sophronius and Silvester. Martyrs Charisius, Nicephorus, and Agapius.

Please remember in your prayers: Suffering Christians of Egypt, Syria, the Middle East and Ukraine. 150 Christians held prisoner in Syria, Bishop BOULOS and Bishop YOHANNA, of Aleppo. Archimandrites Athanasy, Nectarios, Pachomy. Archpriests Alvian, Eugene, Leonid, John, Jason, John, Vincent. Priests Jacobus, Leonid. Deacons Mark, Demetrios, Philip. Mothers Raphaela, Michaela, Catherine, Anna. Monk Victor, Valentina, Dimitri, Nina, Daniel, Catherine, Helen, Anna, Peter, Helen, Michael, Stephanie, Zara, Nolan, Emelie, Michael, Ed, Nettie, Maria, Michael, John, James, Nancy, Susan, Daniel, Aaron, Nicole, Ashley, Mark, Jennifer, Nina, Nadine, Michael, Anna, Gregory, Marianna, Helen, Isaiah, Jamie, Albert, Kevin, Robert, Robert, Andrew, David, Warren.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Archpriest Daniel Geeza, Dr John Kurap, Archpriest Mark Shinn, Dr David Albrecht, Jim Gilmartin, Gregory Udics and David Kessler were offered at Liturgy and Moleben today at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the souls of Metropolitan VLADIMIR (Nagosky) and Joyce Strunk were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the soul of Andrew Homyk were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of the "Memory Eternal Requiem Service Fund."

FOR YOUR CALENDAR: • **March 4: Saint Anna Altar Society Baking Schedule: Cookies.** 9.00 am

• **March 5th Thursday, "Town Hall" Meeting to discuss proposed revisions to the Statutes of the OCA** at Saints Peter and Paul Church, Syracuse, NY, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. As decided by the Diocesan Council and with the blessing of Bishop Michael, the New York State Deanery will hold a "town-hall" meeting for all interested parishioners to discuss a **draft of the proposed revisions to the Statutes of the Orthodox Church in America**. The purpose of the meeting is to broadly solicit input so as to refine the draft revisions prior to voting on them at the upcoming All-American Council. Bishop Michael will be present along with Very Reverend Dr. Alexander Rentel (member of the OCA Statute Revision Committee); they will lead presentations and answer questions. The original Statutes were adopted in 1971 and revisions are meant to better reflect our current needs and structure. Copies of the draft revisions will be made available (as promised by Central Church Administration of OCA) in the very near future.

We welcome your participation and feedback in this upcoming meeting.

Contact the Dean, Father Alexey Karlgut, with your questions or comments: ayk0@yahoo.com

Homily on "Great Lent" -- Seven Questions, Seven Answers

His Grace, Michael ~ Bishop of New York and the Diocese of New York and New Jersey

According to the teaching of our Holy Orthodox Church, the goal of the spiritual life of each and every Christian, without exception, is "*theosis*" or deification -- becoming like God -- and union with Him in the heavenly kingdom for all eternity. The Fathers of our Church over the centuries -- great Saints such as Irenaeus of Lyons, Athanasius of Alexandria, Gregory the Theologian, Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa -- have summarized the meaning of God's Incarnation in this formula: "*God became man that man might become like God.*" Certainly we shall only be fully deified on the Last Day, but for each of us the process of theosis must

begin here and now in the present life. While it is true that in this present life very few indeed attain full mystical union with God – we call them saints – every true Christian must try to love the Lord our God as the Scripture says, “with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30), expressing that love by imitating our Savior Jesus Christ in tangible ways.

There is nothing extraordinary about the methods which we must follow in order to be deified. If someone were to ask, "How can I become like God?" the answer "is very simple." In the words of Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware), "... go to Church, receive the Sacraments regularly, pray to God 'in spirit and in truth,' read the Gospels, follow the commandments. The last of these items — 'follow the commandments' — must never be forgotten." Furthermore, in almost simplistic terms, Saint John Chrysostom instructs us that every choice that we make, everything that we do, either brings us closer to Christ or further from Him – it makes us either more like Our Lord or less like Him.

Lent is the proper time for us to evaluate how we are doing in achieving the goal of our spiritual life -- how we are progressing in becoming more and more like our Savior. Hopefully today's video, "Seven Questions, Seven Answers on Our Spiritual Life," will help each of us to clarify this.

Question #1: Since my last confession, have I been praying more regularly, more attentively, more sincerely?

Our Lord gives us the example: In the Gospel of Luke, we see Him in prayer before every event in His life.

Question #2: Over the past year, have I been reading the Scripture more frequently and more devoutly, trying to learn its meaning and live its commandments?

The Bible is a “love letter to us” from the King of Heaven.

Question #3: Since my last confession, have I been attending divine services more faithfully?

In the Gospels, we find Christ praying publicly, in the synagogue on every Sabbath, and in the temple on every feast day.

Question #4: Over the past year, have I received the Holy Mysteries on a regular basis?

Our Lord gave His life on the Cross for the remission of our sins; we receive that forgiveness through Confession and Communion.

Question #5: This Lent and the other fasting seasons, have I abstained from meat and dairy, excess drinking and forms of entertainment as prescribed by the Church?

Our Savior ate and drank nothing for 40 days and 40 nights in the wilderness.

Question #6: Have I been sharing more of my time, talents and financial resources for Christ and the extension of His kingdom here on earth, through the work of the Church?

He said, “to whom much has been given, much is expected.”

Question #7: Since my last confession, have I been more loving, more kind, more forgiving to my family, co-workers, fellow parishioners, the least of His brethren? Have I treated others as the “image of God?”

You will notice that I have only asked 7 questions. Each of us has to answer those questions for ourselves. Only I can truly say if I have come closer to Christ by the things I have done, by the things I am doing.

Hopefully all our answers are “yes.”

But if they are not, there is good news. We can begin anew this very Lenten season to improve our prayer life, our reading of Scripture, our participation in divine services, our reception of Confession and Communion, our fasting discipline, our sharing of time, talents and treasure in thanksgiving to God, and our showing our love for our neighbor in tangible ways.

By doing these things, we will in fact be imitating our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, and in doing so become more and more like Him ... Who loves us more than we love ourselves. To Him be all glory, honor and worship with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

THE VENERABLE AGAPIUS was a novice under the spiritual direction of a priest in the Vatopedi Monastery on Mount Athos. Captured by pirates, Agapius was sold as a slave in Magnesia. After twelve years, he was miraculously freed through the help of the All-Holy Mother of God and returned to Vatopedi. He baptized his former master and became his spiritual father. Agapius continued the remainder of his life in asceticism in Vatopedi and died peacefully in the Lord.

REFLECTION by Saint Nikolai of Zhicha – Faithfulness and obedience to the will of God is necessary to adorn the life of every Christian. As is seen in the life of Saint Agapius, God glorifies the faithful and the obedient. When he was a young man, this saint was captured by pirates, was taken to Asia and was sold to a certain Arab. For twelve years Agapius remained quietly and obediently a slave of this Arab. For twelve years he prayed to the All-Holy Mother of God to help him gain his freedom from bondage. One night, the Virgin Mother of God appeared to him and said, "Arise and go without fear to Mount Athos to your elder." Agapius arose and came to his elder on Mount Athos, the Holy Mountain. When the elder saw Agapius, he was saddened, thinking that Agapius had fled from his master. He said to him, "My child Agapius, you have deceived your master, but you can never deceive God. On the day of the dreadful judgment, you will have to render an answer for that money with which your master purchased you to serve him. Therefore, you must return and faithfully serve your master." Agapius, faithful and obedient to the will of God, returned immediately to Asia, reported to his master, and informed him about everything that had happened. The Arab, learning all of this, was amazed and was overcome with the charity of Christians. He desired to see Agapius' s elder. The Arab arrived at the Holy Mountain, accompanied by his two sons. Here, he and his two sons were baptized. All three of them were tonsured as monks. They remained there until their deaths, practicing the strict life of asceticism, at first, under the guidance of Agapius' s spiritual father, and afterwards, by Agapius himself. Thus, the one-time cruel masters became the obedient disciples of their former slave, faithful to the will of the God of the obedient Agapius.