

+ SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America
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Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory to God For All Things!

August 9, 2015	10 th Sunday after Pentecost	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am
August 15	Saturday	DORMITION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD	Divine Liturgy 9:30 am
		Blessing of flowers after Liturgy	
August 15	Saturday	Great Vespers	4:00 pm
August 16	11 th Sunday after Pentecost	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am

Saints of the Day: Apostle Matthias (63). Synaxis of All Saints of Solovki. New Martyr Margaret (1918). Martyr Anthony of Alexandria. Venerable Psoes of Egypt (4th c.). Martyrs Julian, Marcian, John, James, Alexius, Demetrius, Photius (Phocas), Peter, Leontius, and Mary, of Constantinople (726). Venerable Macarius, Abbot of Oredezh (1532). Saint Alexis Medvedkov, Archpriest of Uzine (1934). Saint Nathy Cruimthir of Achonry, Bishop (c. 610). Saint Phelim, Bishop of Kilmore (6th c.)

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

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Isabella Canellopoulos were offered at Liturgy and Moleben August 2, at the request of her son Demetrios.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Loren Bundt, Annamae Witiak, Angela Baran, Priest Leonid Schmidt and Norma Stehnach were offered at Liturgy and Moleben at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the soul of Olga Prawlocki were offered today at Liturgy and Litiya at the request of Paul Stehnach.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of Metropolitan SERGIUS (Tikhomirov), aunt Sophie Hartong, aunt Katherine Kurap and cousin Archpriest Basil Stroyen were offered today at Liturgy and Litiya at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of Joseph Spytko, Michael Kuzenech and Steve Bius were offered today at Liturgy and Litiya at the request of the "Memory Eternal Requiem Service Fund."

THE FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS on the front steps of the church were donated by Larry and Barbara Daley in memory of the Sobolowski and Brelinsky families.

FYI PARISH COUNCIL MEETING Sunday, August 16, after Liturgy.

Dormition of the Blessed Ever-Virgin Mary Sermon (Luke10: 38-42; 11:27-28) by Father Phillip

On Saturday we will celebrate the feast of the Dormition, the "falling asleep," of the Virgin Mary. And in this feast there's wonderful comfort and encouragement for each of us, as the Lord Jesus uses the physical death of His mother to show us in concrete terms that the power of His resurrection life can and will raise us up too on that last day, not just in spirit but in body. In Mary's death we can see how, for the Christian genuinely committed to Christ, life's most fear experience, death, really can be what Scripture calls it, a "*falling asleep*," only to wake again; and that, in the discovery by the apostles of her empty tomb, Jesus was absolutely truthful in the promise of John 5:28-29 that "*the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves shall hear [Christ's] voice and **come forth**.*" Especially as we grow older and the grave grows nearer, we need to know for certain that what we sing throughout the 40 days of Pascha is not just wishful thinking but unchangeable reality: that "*Christ **is** risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing **life**.*" And in large measure that's precisely the point and purpose of Mary's Dormition: not just to tell us, but to show us, what God's gracious love has in store for each of us.

But there's something else to consider. In our Gospel we find Martha working herself to a frazzle in the kitchen, getting a meal ready for Jesus and His disciples, Who just sort of dropped in. But Mary, Martha's sister and co-host, is out in the living room, sitting at the Lord's feet, listening to Him talk. Now, which of these two women was doing the right thing? It's not an easy question to answer. Custom back then (and still today) required that when you welcomed a person as a guest, you had to do certain things, like feed them (whether they

want to eat or not!); it's just good manners and good hospitality. So Martha's worried about doing what was expected, doing the right thing, being a good hostess.

Mary doesn't seem to care about custom or good manners. Why? Well, in Luke 9:22, Jesus has already warned His disciples that *"the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day."* Jesus knows that the clash is coming, sooner rather than later, and how it will go. And, as any of us would, Jesus needs to talk, to connect with His friends, with the people who care about Him. While we don't what that *"word"* was to which Mary listened it easily could've been Jesus talking about what's ahead and how He's feeling about it; or it could've been Jesus racing against the clock to teach His disciples as much as He could while He still could. Either way, He wanted and needed somebody to listen to Him. And that's what Mary was doing. So who was right: Martha? But she would miss the opportunity to hear the word of the Lord from His own mouth. Then how about Mary? But wasn't she sticking her sister with all the work?

Sound familiar? How often, in our life together as church, do we find ourselves in precisely this conflict between, on the one hand, making the lunch, doing the dishes, cleaning the church, serving on parish council, and all the other jobs that need doing; and, on the other hand, participating in all the various services, coming to Bible study, and all the "spiritual" stuff (although work and prayer are not opposed to each other but are two sides of one and the same coin of our duty to God)? Similar things happen in our families, too, and at work and in our social group. Situations crop up all the time in our lives that ask us to make a decision like the one that faced both Martha and Mary. And along with the decision comes our compulsion to judge, doesn't it? We keep running into this need of ours to see one of the sisters as right and therefore the other as wrong; and especially to see people who make the same choice we do as making the "right" choice, and by implication everybody else as "wrong."

Well, I suspect most of us are more like Martha than Mary. We have things to do, work to finish. The male of our species is particularly prone to going nuts if there's "nothing to do," no physical activity to accomplish. I suspect that's at least part of the reason why in some places there are more women than men in church on Sunday: because the men haven't been taught how and all the ways in which the Liturgy *is* activity. And as good little hyperactive North Americans, we all agree with the phrase, "Don't just stand there, do something!" The role we're most comfortable with is server, worker, accomplisher. Those things can be measured, and we can use them to justify our existence. "Look what I did today for you, Lord. Aren't I a good Christian?"

Not often enough are we like Mary: spending time with the Lord, listening, not "doing" but just being. Why? Because too often not "doing" feels like "wasting time." If we're not doing something, we start to feel guilty. So to condemn Martha is to condemn ourselves. But to choose Martha, and condemn Mary, is to go against Jesus' own words in support of Mary. His comment to Martha, *"Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her,"* is a but another way of reminding Martha of how, in Matthew 4:4, Jesus Himself had rebuked the devil by quoting what God had said in Deuteronomy 8:3 so many centuries earlier: *"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."*

As a society we've lost the rhythm of work and rest. Most people these days live frantic lives, and we're much too busy all the time. Even here and now, in this house of God, we're busy: busy listening, busy thinking, busy planning. We don't rest well. We don't reflect well. We don't tune in to the still small voice that is within us very well. For most of us our inner Martha has virtually taken over. And yeah, I know: somebody *does* have to do the work. But how shall that work get done? And from where shall we draw energy to do it? And how shall we know whether it is important work or not, if we have not taken time to think it all through and if we have not taken time to talk with and to listen to our Lord? We must work on choosing the better part. Yes, there's always something to be done, always a job to be accomplished. But when that "something" gets to possess us, leaving us with no time for prayer, no time for quiet, no time for the work of the Spirit, then it has become obsessive. And in our culture it *has* become obsessive.

So in the midst of the mess, where's the Good News? Where's the grace, than generous and totally undeserved favor of God? It's happening around Mary. In that culture, Mary didn't have the right to just sit. She had responsibilities; she was co-host and had a job to do. But Mary got to sit and listen to Jesus anyway. And for us, that's Good News indeed. As much as it goes against most of our inclinations, we all need to spend time just being with Jesus: not doing, not evangelizing, not ushering in the Kingdom, not solving all the world's problems, not even studying the Bible; but just spending time with Someone Who loves us and letting Him speak to us through the Bible. The good news is that we don't have to be "busy bees for Jesus." The time we spend prayerfully reflecting, listening, being silent before the Master, is just as important as our "doing." Instead of "Don't just stand there; do something!" we also can and need to say, "Don't just do something; stand there!"

You see, what God really cares about is relationships: our relationship with Him, and our relationship with others. God already knows the real us, and He wants us to know the real Him; to know Him and, through Him to be able to really know and to really love others. We can be ourselves before God, as Mary was. We don't have to beat our head against the wall getting everything just perfect, because we can never do that anyway. We just have to be and be with Him.

The story of Mary and Martha, and our reaction to it, show us something about ourselves: our compulsion to judge and the fact that there are choices to be made, not so much about what is right or wrong, but about what's necessary, what's good, what's wonderful, and what's even better. Through this incident, we not only learn about God; but God also reveals us to ourselves, should we care to listen. For many of us, the message may be, "Don't be so anxious about getting things exactly right, and don't be so busy. Stop for a minute, maybe even two. Look and listen. Enjoy the experience that's before you. There's grace here: receive it." And for all of us, the message is clear and simple: Isn't it time we slowed down a bit to make Jesus feel welcome in the home of our hearts?