

ICHC NTKRA SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America
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Let every heart prepare Him room!

December 12, 2010 Sunday of the Forefathers of the Lord Divine Liturgy 9:30 am
Adam, Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, Blessed Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Twelve Patriarchs: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulon, Joseph, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad and Asher: Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, the Three Holy Youths Shadrach, Mesach and Abednego (or Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah): the Twelve Prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi: Elijah, Elisha, Zachariah, and John the Baptist and others.

December 18 Saturday Great Vespers 4:00 pm
December 19 32nd Sunday after Pentecost Divine Liturgy 9:30 am

Saints of the Day: Saint Spyridon the Wonderworker, Bishop of Tremithus (ca 348). Venerable Therapont, Abbot of Monza (16th c.), Hieromartyr Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem (251). Martyr Synesius of Rome (270-275). Venerable Finian, founder of Clonard and Skellig Michael (549), Bishop. Venerable Colman of Glendalough (659) Saint John, Metropolitan of Zichon, founder of the monastery of the Forerunner on Mount Menikion (1333). Venerable Amonathus and Anthus, Monks. Martyr John, Abbot of Zedazeni, Georgia (9th c.). Venerable Abbot Columba (Colm) of Tyrdaglas (+548). Venerable Abbot Cormac (6 c.). Venerable Abbess Edburga of Thanet (+751). Saint Corentin (Cury), Bishop. Venerable Nun Agatha of Wimborne.

Please remember in your prayers: Archpriest Jason, Archpriest Thomas, Archpriest Daniel Pavelchak, Nina, Priest Sergius, Nadine, Helen, Anna, Thomas, Archpriest Vincent, Mother Raphaela, John, Catherine, Ron, Albert, Michael, Gregory, Emma, Cathy, John, Mykola, Dan, Nina, Dan, Isaiah, Robert, Robert, Kevin, Andrew, David, Warren, Michael, Archimandrite Athanasy, Archimandrite Alexander, Archimandrite Isidore, Archimandrite Pachomy.

A word from Saint John of Kronstadt. Here in the church there is the one thing needful: Here is a refuge from the vanity and the storms of life. Here is the calm harbor for souls seeking after salvation. Here is incorruptible food and drink for the soul. Here is the light that enlightens all men existing upon earth. Here is the clean air of the spirit. Here is the fountain of living water which flows to life eternal (John 4:14). Here are distributed the gifts of the Holy Spirit, here is the cleansing of souls. The reading and chanting is done in church in a holy language. All Orthodox Christians should learn it, that they might understand the sweet pronouncements of their mother, who educates her children to prepare them for heaven, for life eternal.... Here in the temple, man comprehends the truly noble origin of his soul, the worth of life and its goal and purpose. Here he is torn away from his fascination with earthly vanities and passions. Here he comprehends his temporal and eternal fate. Here the Savior lives in His Life-giving Mysteries, in His salvation. Here he recognizes his true relationship to God and to his neighbor, to his family and to the society in which he lives. The temple is heaven on earth, a place where intimate union with the Divine takes place. It is a heavenly school, where Christians are taught to become citizens of heaven, where they are taught heavenly norms, the way of life in heaven. It is the threshold of heaven, a place of communal prayer, thanksgiving, and praise of the Triune God, creator and protector of all. It is a place of unification with the angels. What is more honorable and more esteemed than the temple? Nothing. In its Divine Services, as in a blueprint, are severally depicted the fates of all humanity, from beginning to end. The Divine Services are the alpha and omega of the world and of mankind.

A word from Saint Seraphim of Sarov: *“Never, God forbid, for any reason, nor for anyone, except for a silent gesture of agreement or disagreement, converse in the Altar, as it is the place of the presence of the Lord Himself and His Hosts, not permitting it also to others, whoever it might be, even though you may suffer for it. The Lord Himself is present here and all the Cherubim and Seraphim and the Hosts of God stand before Him trembling in fear. Who would dare to speak in His presence?!”* This is true of the Holy Altar and is equally true for the entire Church. There’s nothing wrong with a greeting or kiss or hug for your relatives or friends you haven’t seen for a week or so, but keep your conversation short and to that one point. If you desire longer conversation with someone, chat in front of the Church before you enter, chat at the coffee hour or in front of the Church after the services. But keep the Lord’s Day a day of prayer and dedication to God alone, not only with your deeds but also with your words, and keeping His House a house of holiness, prayer, peace and sanctity – the sanctuary, temple and Throne of God.

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh: **THE EUCHARIST** (19 June 1966)

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

When the Lord instituted at the Last Supper that mystery of our faith which we call the Holy Liturgy or the Eucharist, He gathered round Himself His Disciples, both those who were later to be faithful even unto death,

and also the one who was already prepared to betray his Master. And He confronted him together with the others, with the extraordinary love of God, because to be admitted to a man's table means that he, our host, consider us to be his equals, his companions in the old sense of this word, those who are untitled to break the bread with him, to share with him the substance of life. Equals in the love of God, equals of God through His love to us, — this is one of the aspects of this extraordinary event which we call the Last Supper.

But we have given it also another name, we call it the Eucharist, from a Greek word which means simultaneously "gift" and "thanksgiving". Indeed we can see that communion to the Body and Blood of Christ is the greatest gift which the Lord can grant us: companionship and equality, becoming the co-workers of God. And through the incredible, unfathomable action and power of the Spirit, because this bread is no longer bread only and this wine is no longer only wine, but have truly become the Body and the Blood of the Giver, we become incipiently and increasingly partakers of the divine nature, Gods by adoption, Gods by participation, so that together with the One Who is the Incarnate Son of God, we became the total revelation of man as well as the total revelation of God's presence, the total Christ of whom Saint Ignatius of Antioch spoke.

And beyond this, higher, deeper even than this, in this community of nature and of life with the Only-Begotten Son of God in the words of Saint Irenaeus of Lyon, we become truly with regard to God Himself the only begotten son.

This is the gift, but where is the thanksgiving? What can we bring to the Lord? Bread and wine, they belong to Him; our own lives? Are we not His? He has called us out of naught, He has brought us into being, He has endowed us with all that we are and all that we possess. What then can we give which is really ours? Saint Maximus the Confessor says that God can do all things, save one: He cannot compel the smallest of His creatures to love Him, because love is supreme freedom. This is the only gift which we can bring to God: the gift of a trusting heart.

But why is this mysterious Supper of the Eucharist called the thanksgiving more than any other service, more than any action of ours? What can be given to God? This is a question which the Psalmist was asking himself centuries before Christ appeared and revealed the divine love, and his answer was so unexpected and so true. He says "What reward shall I give to the Lord for all His benefits?" and he replies "I shall take the Cup of salvation, I will give thanks unto the Lord, I will sing praise in the courts of the Temple of the Lord". The supreme act of thanksgiving is not to give back, because one who receives and pays back, repays the gift and in some sort of way, destroys the gift; both indeed become equal, both have given, both have been at the giving end of the chain, but this reciprocal giving has destroyed both joy up to a point. If we wish, if we are capable of receiving, of receiving whole-heartedly, then we are expressing truly our total trust, our assurance that the love of the giver is perfect and it is in receiving whole-heartedly in all simplicity that we bring joy to the one who has given from all his heart.

This is true even in human relationship; we wish to repay a gift only to make ourselves free from gratitude and from a certain enslavement in which we are put when we receive from one who does not love us enough to give whole-heartedly and whom we do not love enough to receive whole-heartedly. And this is why the Eucharist is the supreme thanksgiving of the Church and the supreme thanksgiving of our earth: people who trust the love of God open-heartedly, without any thought of repaying the gift, only rejoicing in the love it expresses, receive from God not only what He can grant but also what He is, participation to His life, to His nature, to His eternity, to His love divine. Only if we are capable of receiving with perfect gratitude and perfect joy can our participation in the Eucharist be true, only then does the Eucharist become for us also the supreme act of gratitude. But gratitude is difficult because it requires both a loving heart capable of rejoicing when it receives and a perfect trust and faith in the love of the one who gives, trust that this gift is not meant as an humiliation or as an act of enslavement. And this is why we must grow from day to day into the ability to love and to be loved, into the ability to be grateful and to rejoice, and only then does become the Last Supper of the Lord the perfect gift of God and the perfect response of the earth. Amen.

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REMINDERS FOR YOUR CALENDARS:

PLEASE submit to Father your parish events for inclusion here in writing. E-mail is particularly welcome.

- Weekday Holy Days – Divine Liturgy at 09.30
- Dec 24th – Christmas Eve VIGIL at 19.00
- Dec 25th – Christmas Day Divine Liturgy at 09.30 (Saturday)
- Dec 26th – Second Day of Christmas Divine Liturgy at 09.30 (Sunday)
- Dec 31st – New Year's Eve No Vespers (Friday)
- Jan 1st – New Year's Day Divine Liturgy at 0930 (Saturday)
- Jan 2nd – Divine Liturgy at 09.30 (Sunday)
- Jan 5th – Epiphany Eve Great Blessing of Water at 19.00, (Wednesday) EPIPHANY EVE HOLY SUPPER
- Feb 12 - Church Musicians and Singers - Spend a day with Bishop Michael and your fellow musicians. 11 am – 3 pm: Holy Resurrection Church, 285 French Hill Road, Wayne NJ 07470. No Charge. This is your chance to exchange ideas and express your needs and concerns as musicians and singers in the diocese. There will also be a mini-workshop, speaker to be announced shortly. Details will be announced as soon as plans are final.
- Jan 6th – Epiphany Divine Liturgy at 09.30 (Thursday)
- **Yolka: TODAY!** After Divine Liturgy, **luncheon**. And **Chinese Auction**: Tickets from Rebecca Hawranick
- **January Raffle**: Ticket sales are due in by the end of this month. Please contact project coordinators Dale and Nancy Richards if you need more tickets.
- **Calendars**: The Petykiewicz, Iocovozzi and Burns Funeral Home is underwriting the cost of wall calendars from Saint Tikhon's. They will be available for pick-up at the candle window later this month.
- **Offering Envelopes**: Envelopes should be available downstairs later this month. Please let Lesia Roback know if your envelope needs have changed.