

SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Newsletter

Volume 9, Issue 8

August 2009

July Council Highlights

- ✘ June Operating Income was \$7,985. and Operating Expenses were \$14,437, resulting in a deficit of \$6,452. for the month of June, and a year-to-date deficit of \$857.
- ✘ Attendance and donations have declined over the summer.
- ✘ Use and clean-up of the kitchen discussed.
- ✘ After meeting with several civil engineering firms, the council voted to approve a contract to continue with Atherton/Dickinson
- ✘ Patio roof on the north side of the mission house replaced.



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Wait on the Lord

Some popular stand-up comedians have recently taken to upbraiding the God of the Old Testament. He is, they complain in their routines, ruthless. He is unpredictable. He is—especially in the case of Moses—distinctly unfair. One comic recently declared, as he strode across the stage with his microphone and cigarette, that it wasn't right that Moses should be kept from entering the Promised Land. After all, he had done many good and courageous things for God.



The Feast of the Transfiguration this week gives us a chance to reflect on this comic's declaration. On the day before the Feast we remember a woman who also can encourage us to think about God's "fairness." She is Saint Nonna, the mother of Saint Gregory the Theologian and a woman who knew the efficacy of heartfelt prayer.

Nonna, a dedicated Christian, was married to a pagan man. Her husband's lack of belief was a source of pain for many years, but she kept praying for his enlightenment. Though it took a long time, Nonna's husband did become a

Christian, and eventually was made bishop of the city of Nazianzus. Nonna was a female deacon. One of the duties of deaconesses was to help and guide Christian women married to pagans. So she may well have been a strong support to other women in her same circumstances. In addition, she was the influential mother of one of the Church's greatest saints.

But Nonna had to wait on the Lord. Her husband's conversion came only after long years of faithful prayer. She had to trust God, and believe that He would choose the right time to turn her husband to the faith.

We Christians have a similar trust in God's intention for His beloved prophet Moses. For us, unlike the comedians who complain of the unfair way God treated him, Moses' story does not end with the Lord's words in Deuteronomy 34:4, when He tells Moses, "I have let you see it [the Promised Land] with your eyes, but you shall not go over there." At the Feast of the

Transfiguration, we will see him again.

Not only will we see Moses, but he will be standing with the Lord in His glory, representing the Law and all those who have died. Moses will show us the eternal life that God intends for all of us.

Nonna in her lifetime never doubted that the Lord would answer her prayers for her husband. Moses wasn't allowed to enter the Promised Land, but he was given the great gift of standing before the whole universe in the Lord's transfigured presence. When we are tempted to wonder about God's providence, or His "fairness", we can look to the pious example of Nonna. We can study the icon that shows us the mountaintop appearance of



of Moses long after his earthly death. They remind us of what it means to wait on the Lord.

This weekly bulletin insert complements the curriculum published by the Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America. This and many other Christian Education resources are available at <http://dce.oca.org>.

Message From Our Rector

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Every August 9th, the Orthodox Church celebrates the feast of the "Uncovering of the Relics" of Saint Herman of Alaska. This feast commemorates his canonization as the first American saint to be glorified by the Church, which took place on this date in 1970. Saint Herman, a lay monk, was part of the original missionary band that brought Orthodoxy to the North American continent. He arrived in Alaska in 1794 as part of the original Russian Orthodox mission and lived there until his repose in 1837. For more than forty years he ministered to the natives and taught them by word and example. With his own severe asceticism kept as a secret, he ministered to both physical and spiritual needs of the people. His memory is preserved, fresh and personal, among their descendents who to this day lovingly refer to him as "Apa" Herman. As we commemorate him on August 9, we pray that by his prayers we, also, will truly receive



the Gospel he brought to this continent and follow the way that he taught. Like him, we hope to grow in holiness and ourselves be numbered among the saints—the common vocation of all Christians.

But how can we grow in holiness? How can we best respond to the Lord's call to holiness? What is the "secret" of becoming a saint?

The way in which we each can become holy is as unique as each one of us and so we can be certain that there is no one answer to these questions. But we can be assured that for all of us sanctity is achieved by uphill battles and spiritual struggles as well as by surprising moments of grace and unexpected blessings. As Orthodox Christians, we know that are called to grow in holiness, using the great gifts of the Church, the Scriptures, the Holy Mysteries, the prayerful intercession of the Holy Theotokos and the Communion of Saints. And we are supported in our journey to holiness by one another, by our families, by our parish community, and by all

our brothers and sisters in Christ.

As we reflect upon the life of Saint Herman—and upon the lives of all our brothers and sisters, the Saints—let us also reflect upon our own response to the Lord's call to holiness. Through the prayers of our Venerable Father Herman of Alaska, may the Lord God grant each one of us—and all of us together—the grace to continue our growth in holiness. Until that great day that we are all united in the presence of the Lord in the Kingdom of Heaven.

With love in the Lord,

Father David

Troparion to Saint Herman of Alaska (Tone 4)

O blessed Father Herman of Alaska,
North star of Christ's Holy Church,
The light of your holy life and great deeds
Guides those who follow the Orthodox way.
Together we lift high the Holy Cross
You planted firmly in America.
Let all behold and glorify Jesus Christ,
Singing his Holy Resurrection.

Seven Holy Maccabee Martyrs

The seven holy Maccabee martyrs Abim, Antiochus, Gurias, Eleazar, Eusebonus, Alimus and Marcellus, their mother Solomonica and their teacher Eleazar suffered in the year 166 before Christ under the impious Syrian king Antiochus IV Epiphanes. This foolish ruler loved pagan and Hellenistic customs, and held Jewish customs in contempt. He did everything possible to turn people from the Law of Moses and from their covenant with God. He desecrated the Temple of the Lord, placed a statue of the pagan god Zeus there, and forced the Jews to worship it. Many people abandoned the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but there were also those who continued to believe that the Savior would come.

A ninety-year-old elder, the scribe and teacher Eleazar, was brought to trial for his faithfulness to the Mosaic Law. He suffered tortures and died at Jerusalem.

The disciples of St Eleazar, the seven Macca-



bee brothers and their mother Solomonica, also displayed great courage. They were brought to trial in Antioch by King Antiochus Epiphanes.

They fearlessly acknowledged themselves as followers of the True God, and refused to eat pig's flesh, which was forbidden by the Law.

The eldest brother acted as spokesmen for the rest, saying that they preferred to die rather than break the Law. He was subjected to fierce tortures in sight of his brothers and their mother. His tongue was cut out, he was scalped, and his hands and feet were cut off. Then a cauldron and a large frying pan were heated, and the first brother was thrown into the frying pan, and he died.

The next five brothers were tortured one after the other. The seventh and youngest brother was the last one left alive. Antiochus suggested to St Solomonica to persuade the boy to obey him, so that her last son at least would be

spared. Instead, the brave mother told him to imitate the courage of his brothers.

The child upbraided the king and was tortured even more cruelly than his brothers had been. After all her seven children had died, St Solomonica, stood over their bodies, raised up her hands in prayer to God and died.

The martyric death of the Maccabee brothers inspired Judas Maccabeus, and he led a revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes. With God's help, he gained the victory, and then purified the Temple at Jerusalem. He also threw down the altars which the pagans had set up in the streets. All these events are related in the Second Book of Maccabees (Ch. 8-10).

Various Fathers of the Church preached sermons on the seven Maccabees, including St Cyprian of Carthage, St Ambrose of Milan, St Gregory Nazianzus and St John Chrysostom.

Reprinted from the Orthodox Church in America web site, <http://ocafs.oca.org/FeastSaintsViewer.aspx?SID=4&ID=1&FSID=102162>*

Discovering Truth

Very Rev. Vladimir Berzonsky

"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (John 14:6)

When we do as the apostles, taking their cue in giving our lives meaning by accepting the invitation of Jesus to "Follow Me," we learn why the early church's first title was The Way (Acts 9:19,24). Learning is a process, not just a goal. We measure our intelligence and wisdom not by a diploma or degree, but by what we've been discovering and assimilating on the pathway through life. We realize that our salvation came through the cross and resurrection of Christ, yet we find ourselves growing in understanding as we follow Him from the incarnation through His ascent and return to the "right hand of the Father."

In that way we learn what Truth is; or better put, Who is Truth? He teaches by example the variant meanings of truth. For the Jews, truth is the Law, and to abide by it is to be right with God. You shall honor the Sabbath. No exceptions accepted. And yet we find Him breaking that law. He heals on the Sabbath. Was that wrong? Following Him we remember that He is also the Truth. So Truth transcends Law. As we wend our way through this life, we are trained to be

law-abiding citizens of our country and to keep the traditions and rules of the Church; however, we realize that at times, situations in which we find ourselves may create conditions that cause us to reflect on our values and consider what would be the best way to resolve the given situation.

Truth can be understood as reason. The Greek term *aletheia* has this meaning. The proper way to act is to do what is logical. In following Christ we realize that He isn't always rational in the world's understanding of the term. When St. Peter chastises the Lord for dropping hints that His way of redeeming humanity has to do with suffering, rejection and ultimately crucifixion, He rebukes the apostle in strongest terms, calling him Satan, realizing that the evil one is speaking through him. Later, when He announced His intention to go up to Jerusalem, St. Thomas made a similar observation.

Through the centuries, Christians who had acted in accordance with their faith, not their instinct for self-preservation, giving their bodies to be tortured and put to death for the sake of Christ, have been considered holy martyrs and honored by the Church. We as members of the Way, following the living Way, Jesus Christ, find meaning each hour of the days of our lives as

we are challenged by the constant question: What is the right way to reply to another person -- to act in a manner fitting as a Christian? To do what the Lord would have me do?

Truth is that glorious Person whose life, death and resurrection give meaning to the entire world. Like Him we obey the Law and live by the Ten Commandments, but also like Him we find there are situations when we must use our consciences to weigh right and wrong, making the best choice given the circumstances.

And we realize that Life is not limited to this present lifetime, but Christ the Life of the world shows us the meaning of His admonition: "He who loves his life in this world must lose it, but he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life" (John 12:25). Following His example, we comprehend the great truth that the present life is but a preparation for what is to come. He will be there at the end, and I will not only be following Him, but He will turn around to face me and greet me, welcoming me as a true follower of Him in this world and beyond.

Reprinted from the "Thoughts in Christ" series, July 5, 2009, Bulletin 36, Volume XLVI, Orthodox Church in America web site, <http://www.oca.org/CHRIST-thoughts-article.asp?SID=6&ID=356>*

SS Peter and Paul Holds Semi-Annual Meeting

On Sunday, July 26, 2009, SS Peter and Paul held its semi-annual parish meeting. The Myrhbearers provided croissant sandwiches and wraps during coffee hour. The meeting was concise and to the point, with the main topics of discussion being the financial state of the church and the ongoing parking lot project.

Father David talked about stewardship. During the summer, attendance is low, and donations decrease. Unfortunately, our utilities bills tend to increase at this time of year due to the extreme heat. David Homyak reinforced this when he presented the year-to-date financial report. June saw a decrease in donations and a significant increase in expenses, putting us into the red (deficit). Only a third of members makes a yearly pledge, making it difficult to plan the budget. Semi-annual contribution statements were available for pick-up.

Nick Enoch presented an update on the parking lot project. We currently have \$50,000 in donations, which will get us through the design, planning, and city permits. However, we do not have sufficient funds to actually move

forward to break ground on the project.

Meanwhile, the children had their own fun. They started by making foam crosses that said: "Love God", and then moved to the conference room to watch the movie "Spirit."



The faithful receive communion before the semi-annual meeting.



Parishioners review the church's financial report.



Olga, Marty, Mary, Katrina, Betsy and Dorothy listen.



Father David talks about stewardship.



Big smiles . . .



Nick Enoch gives an update on the parking lot project.



. . . as the kids finish their crosses



. . . and watch a movie.

When Words Don't Come

Very Rev. John Breck

An elderly woman recently broke down during Confession and began sobbing. She had attempted to offer to God what she felt was her sinful neglect in raising her son. Throughout his childhood and adolescence, she had taken him to church services on Sundays and feast days, and each day she had prayed with him and for him. Apparently, she had done all she could, gently and supportively, to lead him into life in Christ, with a serious and deep reverence for the Orthodox Christian faith.

Now that he was in his late thirties, with a failed marriage behind him and no apparent connection to the Church, his mother was heartbroken. Her grief was compounded by guilt, since she was convinced she had somehow failed both him and her Lord. She asked the priest hearing her confession how she should now pray for him, especially since he was about to embark on a second marriage with a woman who had even less interest in the Church than he did.

The priest tried to suggest ways she could focus her prayer. In the weeks that followed, he kept in touch with her, only to hear that she felt she couldn't pray at all, that she didn't have any idea as to how she should formulate prayer that would speak both to her son's need and to her own. She tried spontaneous intercession, then her well-worn prayer book, then psalms, chosen for their emphasis on suffering, loss and grief. When she returned for confession a few weeks later, she felt she needed to add to her original burden the dryness of her prayer. In particular, she found she couldn't pray for her son at all without interrupting her petitions with weeping. She wanted desperately to ask God for help and guidance in her prayer as well as in dealing with her son's situation. But she found she simply couldn't pray. The words just didn't come.

More dramatic experiences of this kind occur especially around unexpected loss or a tragic death. A man who is the sole breadwinner for his wife and children gets laid off at work. A family receives a visit from the military, informing them their son was recently killed in Afghanistan. Or the baby a young couple has just brought into the world turns out to have an untreatable and lethal genetic defect. If these families are firmly rooted in a particular faith tradition, they will most naturally begin by praying about the crisis that has just impacted their lives. But very often the prayer seems inadequate, even empty. What does one ask for?

How does one formulate a request that sufficiently describes the situation at hand and appropriately requests that God provide some answer? And how does a family pray for a child who has just been killed, or for a parent suddenly carried off by an unpredictable fatal illness?

These are examples that point out what we all know: that sometimes we find ourselves at a loss for words when we want most earnestly and explicitly to pray for someone or something that is of crucial importance to us. It can also be difficult to find appropriate words when we begin for the first time to develop a pattern of regular prayer. But there we have resources at hand that can help structure and provide content to our prayer: the Scriptures or a traditional prayer book, for example, together with the sound advice of spiritual teachers. (In this regard, I often think of Metropolitan Anthony Bloom's reply to a woman who complained of difficulty in beginning to pray. When more traditional means don't work, he told her, it can be enough to sit in front of an icon and knit, leaving spiritual growth and inner progress to the Holy Spirit.)

There are other times, though, when a crisis or ongoing stress creates a stumbling block in the way of prayer, to such an extent that we feel we can't pray at all. Again, the words are just not there. We don't know how to formulate what we need; we can't even discern an appropriate way to express what we feel. "Ask and you shall receive," the Scriptures tell us. But how do we ask for some gift of grace, or solution to a problem, or relief from the suffering of acute loss, when we can't step back and away from the tension and chaos we may feel, in order to put that request into coherent words? How does this woman pray for her son, estranged from the Church? Or the parents for their teen-ager who is being brought home in a coffin? Or the young couple for their terminally ill newborn? Grief has a pernicious way of stifling prayer, since it attacks on the level of both mind and feelings. Where, then, does this leave us?

It's especially important in times like these to remember that God knows each of us to the very depths of our being. Nothing is hidden from him: not our sinfulness, nor our longings, nor our grief. In fact he knows them, and us, better than we ever can. He not only knows them, but he carries in himself the burden of our sin, the awareness of our needs and de-

sires, and the suffering caused by our loss. This means that he does not need for us to formulate our prayers as if to inform him of our situation. It means that in times of stress and chaos that are so devastating that our minds can't function well enough to formulate what we feel we want or need, that is no impediment to God. In those moments, it may be far more appropriate to stand before God in silence. Stand "with the mind in the heart," fully confident that God understands our needs and desires, and that he wants nothing more than to address them directly and in such a way as to further us along the way towards salvation. If any words are required at all, they are simply "Thy will be done!"

Two quotations in particular speak to this question and provide a fitting close to what I've wanted to say about prayer "when words don't come." The first is a reflection by Metropolitan Anthony, mentioned earlier, and the second is from the sayings of one of the great desert Fathers.

"Prayer is essentially standing face to face with God, consciously striving to remain collected and absolutely still and attentive in his presence, which means standing with an undivided mind, an undivided heart and an undivided will in the presence of the Lord; and," the Metropolitan adds, "that is not easy."

Abba Macarius was asked, 'How should one pray?' The old man said, 'There is no need at all to make long discourses; it is enough to stretch out one's hands and say, "Lord, as you will, and as you know, have mercy." And if the conflict grows fiercer say, "Lord, help!" He knows very well what we need and he shows us his mercy.'¹

1. A. Bloom, *Creative Prayer* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, Ltd., 1987, 2004), p. 26; B. Ward, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (London: Mowbrays, 1975), p. 111.

Reprinted from "Life in Christ", July, 2009, Article #2, the Orthodox Church in America web site, <http://www.oca.org/CHRIST-life-article.asp?SID=6&ID=178&MONTH=July&YEAR=2009>*

From the Fathers . . .

"If you wish to be saved, seek no other thing here in this world as much as love."

Transfigured Life

Very Rev. John Breck

The Gospel accounts of Jesus' Transfiguration differ in some small but significant details. With typically colorful language, St Mark emphasizes Jesus' garments, describing them as "glistening, intensely white, as no fuller on earth could bleach them." St Luke adds that "the appearance of his countenance was altered"; and St Matthew declares, "his face shone like the sun." Each of these narratives makes the point that Jesus manifests what came to be called the *shekinah*, a word used in the Jewish Targums (Aramaic translations of the Old Testament, especially the Pentateuch). The term basically signifies "dwelling place," but as the divine abode it connotes as well "glory." The Jerusalem Targum on Leviticus 9:6, for example, reads: "the glory of the Shekinah of the Lord" will come upon the people as they seek atonement with God through various sacrificial offerings.

Each evangelist also offers unique details concerning the other figures in the Transfiguration scene. Luke elaborates most fully, declaring that Moses and Elijah spoke with Jesus concerning the "departure" he was to accomplish in Jerusalem. The term used is *exodon*, a clear allusion to the New Exodus Jesus will endure through his crucifixion and fulfill by his resurrection. For his part, Matthew shows the interaction between Jesus and the disciples. They fall on their faces with "awe" or dread, only to be commanded, "Rise, and have no fear!" Those who read or heard the Gospel account would immediately have recognized here a double allusion. The consoling words, "have no fear" is what has been termed a "formula of revelation," as uttered by the archangel Gabriel at the Annunciation to the Theotokos (Lk 1:30), or by Christ himself as he approached his disciples in the darkness of night, walking on the water (Mt 14:27). And the initial order, "Rise!" is the same word that signifies "resurrection." "Rise," Jesus implicitly commands, "as you shall one day rise with me in glory!"

The Holy Fathers of the Church recognized in this passage not only a revelation of the true meaning of Jesus' person and a manifestation of the Holy Trinity, analogous to the scene of Jesus' baptism (the Father's approving voice, the central focus on the Son, the presence and activity of the Spirit in the light or in the overshadowing cloud). They also found in this account a promise extended to all those who ac-

tively long to share in Christ's death, resurrection and glorification.

In his "Second Century on Theology," St Maximus the Confessor makes a startling claim, which was nevertheless understood as both a promise and an exhortation to be received by anyone who lives "in Christ." "In those found worthy," he declares, "the Logos of God is transfigured to the degree to which each has advanced in holiness, and he comes to them with his angels in the glory of the Father. For the more spiritual principles in the Law and the prophets—symbolized by Moses and Elijah when they appeared with the Lord at his transfiguration—manifest their glory according to the actual receptive capacity of those to whom it is revealed." To the faithful believer, Christ's Transfiguration becomes an inner reality, a transforming gift of grace.

St Gregory Palamas similarly stresses the intimate link between the Transfiguration of Christ and our own transformation into his divine glory. "In his incomparable love for men, the Son of God did not merely unite his divine Hypostasis to our nature...but, O incomparable and magnificent miracle! He unites himself also to human hypostases, joining himself to each of the faithful by communion in his holy Body. For he becomes one body with us (Eph 3:6), making us a temple of the whole Godhead (Col 2:9). How then would he not illuminate those who share worthily in the divine radiance of his Body within us, shining upon their soul as he once shone on the bodies of the apostles on Tabor? For as this Body, the source of the light of grace, was at that time not yet united to our body, it shone exteriorly on those who came near it worthily, transmitting light to the soul through the eyes of sense. But today, since it is united to us and dwells with us, it illumines the soul interiorly" (*Triads* I.3.38).

Fr John Meyendorff gives a poignant commentary on this passage. "Since the Incarnation, our bodies have become 'temples of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us' (1 Cor 6:19); it is there, within our own bodies, that we must seek the Spirit, within our bodies sanctified by the sacraments and engrafted by the eucharist into the Body of Christ. God is now to be found within; He is no longer exterior to us. *Therefore, we must find the light of Mount Tabor within ourselves.* The apostles had only an exterior vision, for Christ had not yet died and risen from the dead, but today we are, all of us, in living reality members of His Body, the Church."^[1]

As we meditate on Christ's Transfiguration and celebrate the mystery of his glorified life, it is important that we be aware of an aspect of Orthodoxy that stands at the very heart of our faith. It is the fact that we are called—invited—to assume an extraordinary responsibility that can lead to an ineffable end of glory and joy. That responsibility is simply to accept, with gratitude and faithfulness, the ascetic way that leads from repentance and "purification" through "illumination," and on to "deification." This was originally proposed as the pathway for catechumens, who progressed toward baptism and full participation in the Body of Christ. Under monastic influence, it came to signify the pilgrimage open to every Christian believer who is drawn toward the eternal Light that illumines all things and gives meaning to it all. The apostles, on Mount Tabor and in the Upper Room on the night of Jesus' betrayal, had only an "exterior vision" of that Light, that Presence. Through eucharistic communion, we, like they in the aftermath of Pentecost, have Christ dwelling in us. We have become the *shekinah* of the Lord. And if we look hard enough, we can even find within ourselves the Light of Mount Tabor.

1. J. Meyendorff, *St Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality* (SVS Press, 1998), p. 107, italics added.

Reprinted from "Life in Christ", August, 2009, Article #1, the Orthodox Church in America web site, <http://www.oca.org/CHRIST-life-article.asp?>



REMINDERS

- ☺ As the temperatures continue to soar, please do not prop open the doors to the Cultural Center.
- ☺ There is a basketball and several jump ropes for the youth to use during coffee hour. They can be found in the Pre-K/K classroom. Just remember to return them when you are finished using them.
- ☺ If your children are playing in the classrooms, please remember to make sure they clean up when they are done.

The Memorable Words of Micah

This Friday [August 14] we remember the prophet Micah, who was a younger contemporary of Isaiah but came from a very different

background. While Isaiah was an aristocrat, Micah was a working-class man, and it shows in his writing.

He came from a small village in the foothills between the coastal plain and the central highlands of Palestine. He was keenly aware of the struggles of the working poor, and harshly critical

of the greedy rich who exploited and oppressed them. Micah couched his prophetic warnings to corrupt public officials in earthy, graphic language:

"Hear, you heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel! You who hate the good and love the evil, who tear the skin from off my people, and their flesh from off their bones; who eat the flesh of my people and flay their skin from off them, and break their bones in pieces, and chop them up like meat in a kettle, like flesh in a cauldron" (2:1-4).



It wasn't only Micah's background that distinguished him from Isaiah. He also didn't share the older prophet's firm conviction that Jerusalem, being the holy city of Zion, would never be destroyed. Micah saw the city as a den of corruption rather than a place inviolably protected by God. He wrote: "Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed as a field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins..." (3:12).

A century later, the prophet Jeremiah made similar predictions concerning Jerusalem, so infuriating religious leaders that they wanted to put him to death for treason. But others saved Jeremiah's life by reminding everyone of Micah's earlier prophecy, which like Jeremiah's was clearly spoken in the name of the Lord.

For all his scathing rebukes, Micah also gives us beautiful words of peace and hope. In 4:3 we read, "...and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." It is Micah who prophesies that "You, O Bethle-

hem Ephrathah, who are little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for Me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days" (5:1). He also reminds us "to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" (6:8).

The epistle reading for this day tells us that Jesus Christ never vacillates, never says both Yes and No. In Him it is "always Yes. For all the promises of God find their Yes in Him" (2 Corinthians 1: 20-21).

That faithful "Yes" in God is anticipated in Micah when he says, "I will wait for the God of my salvation" (7:7) and especially in his prophecy's final words: "Thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt show faithfulness to Jacob, and steadfast love to Abraham, as Thou hast sworn to our fathers from the days of old" (7:19-20).

This weekly bulletin insert complements the curriculum published by the Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America. This and many other Christian Education resources are available at <http://>

Around SS Peter & Paul

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Peter Radjenovich
Barbara Peterson
August 1

Delina Gezai
August 5

Paras Radjenovich
August 14

William Osolinsky
Hiewt Teklea
July 15

Bess Demos
August 17

Juliana Delsante
August 25

Jim Hanemaayer
Ceclai Zerai
August 26

Dennis Tarasevich
August 27

CONGRATULATIONS TO

Michael and Cassandra Wagner on the occasion of their marriage. And to the newly-married Tim and Ekaterina Kourt.. May the Lord bless these newlyweds with many happy and healthy years and may He crown them with glory and honor!



"Thou has set upon their heads crowns of precious stone . . ."

PRAYER LIST

*"I was sick and you visited me."
Matt 25:36*

We offer prayers to all of our parishioners who are ill or unable to attend services:

Harold Homyak
Dorothy Yost
Protodeacon Alexis
Chuck Ullmann
Marie Yevin
Rose & Bill Koval
Joe Kurowski
Peg Linderman
Pauline & Dan Vinay
Beatrice Washington
Anna Michkofsky
Stephanie Homyak

Many Years!



Cass and Mike Wagner

If you know of anyone else in need of our prayers, please contact Father David.

Many Years! Mnogaya Leta!

Bits and Pieces

FATHER DAVID ON PILGRIMAGE

Father David will be participating in the annual pilgrimage to the relics of Saint Herman, Kodiak, Alaska, and will be away from the parish August 7-16. In case of a pastoral emergency, please contact Father Damian Kuolt. Please note that Father David can always be contacted on his cell phone: 480-287-0240.

WELCOME

Welcome to Father William John Clark, who will be serving the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, August 9th and 16th.

NO VESPERS

There will be no vespers service on Saturday, August 8th and August 16th.

SHRINE OF THE THEOTOKOS

The icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, which was blessed last May on Mothers' Day has now been enshrined in a specially-built *kiot*. This special shrine provides our parish community with a special place of prayer. With our prayerful needs and concerns, as well as with prayers of gratitude and thanksgiving, we can always approach the Holy Theotokos, the



Mother of God given to us as our own Mother, and ask her prayerful intercession for us before the Throne of her Son.

In this icon, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary appears as the Queen of All (*Vsetsaritsa*). *She is enthroned who once enthroned Christ God in her womb, and on her lap as a small child.* This icon is based on the original *Pantanassa* or "Queen of All" icon. It is a copy of the 17th-century miraculous icon treasured in the Athonite Monastery of Vatopedi. Through the grace of this icon there were so many healings of cancer that a copy of it was requested and blessed for those suffering in Russia where many miracles occurred.

In the year 1991 many reprints of the icon "Queen of All" were given as a blessing to the Russian children who had cancer. Doctors at the Cancer Center in Moscow were the witnesses of many miracles of healing that happened afterwards. Upon receiving a copy of this icon one boy who was dying from cancer unexpectedly began to feel better. He asked that he be allowed to take the icon home and shortly afterwards recovered fully.

May God bless the parishioner who has gifted

our parish with this special shrine.

NEWSLETTER DONATION

Thank you to Walter and Tania Booriakin for donating 11"x17" paper for the newsletter. You can help defray costs for the newsletter by donating your old printer cartridges. We can use them to trade for supplies for the newsletter. Please see Dave or Stephanie Homyak. Thank you!



NEW TITLES IN THE BOOKSTORE

There are three brand new adult titles at the bookstore!

Our first selection is from St. Symeon the New Theologian called The First-Created Man. These writings are a collection of seven homilies which deal with Adam's fall and our redemption by Jesus Christ. The aim of these homilies is that of reconnecting modern man with the ancient understanding of the true purpose of life. A wonderful book no matter how long you have been a Christian! \$8

Our second new title is from a lecture given by Fr. Seraphim Rose, God's Revelation to the Human Heart. Drawing upon a wealth of sources—the Holy Scriptures, patristic writings, the Lives of ancient and modern saints, and accounts of persecuted Christians in today's world—Fr. Seraphim leads the audience to the core of all Christian life: the conversion of the heart of man, which begins to burn with love for Christ and transforms one into a new being. \$5

And finally, our third book by James Early is about a young, Bible-believing, on-fire-for-Jesus Baptist minister and his wife who spent years studying and preparing to be missionaries. After arriving in Bosnia and working among the Serbs for almost three years, they know the language and culture and love the people. Then they up and decide to convert to Orthodoxy, forcing them to forfeit their missionary careers. Did they lose their minds? Read the book and find out!! \$16



WELCOME

We welcome all visitors to SS Peter & Paul. We hope your visit was enriching and enlightening. Please join us in the Cultural Center, behind the church, for our Fellowship Hour. It's a chance to meet some of our members, other visitors, and enjoy some

coffee and fellowship. It's also a great time to look at our bookstore.

BLESSING OF VEHICLES

In accordance with a well-established custom to bless vehicles on the Feast of the Holy Prophet Elijah, Father



David blessed the cars of parishioners on Sunday, July 19th.



CHURCH FLOWERS

Thanks to Marty Gala's donation for the month of May, Mary Kelemen for the months of June and July, Tania Booriakin for the month of August, and Vi Wasilenko for the month of September. These flowers adorn the Altar and Terapod every Sunday. If at any time a parish family member would like to donate flowers in memory or for a special occasion, please contact Elizabeth Michel.

COFFEE HOUR

Volunteers who have come forward for
 May 24 -Marty Gala
 May 31 -Seneta, Kidean
 June 7 - Yuliya Kalody
 June 14 - Ann Garza (40 day Memorial for son)
 June 21 -Alma
 June 28 - Myrrh Bearers,
 July 5 - Vicki Kulik & Myrrh Bearers
 July 12 - Barbara Peterson
 July 19 - Alma & Tonya,
 July 26 - Myrrh Bearers.

Thanks to each and every one of you. We also want to thank those who have brought in items such as croissants, muffins, pastries, and bread to add to our coffee hour. I know we all look forward and enjoy our fellowship hour on Sundays. However, we still need those who have not come forward and volunteered and would be interested to help finish out the year. We are a parish family and we all need to participate. Please see Pat Starkey or contact her at 623-512-2021.

August 2009

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|----------------------------|--|--|---|----------------------------------|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">FOOD DRIVE</p> <p>Please bring in your nonperishable food donations for St. Mary's church narthex and Food Bank. Collection boxes are in the Cultural Center.</p>  | | | | | | <p>1 Procession of the Lifegiving Cross</p> <p>BEGINNING OF DORMITION FAST</p> <p>5:00pm Great Vespers</p> |
| <p>2</p> <p>8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>FOCA Meeting</p> | <p>3</p> | <p>4</p> | <p>5 Forefeast Transfiguration</p> <p>6:00pm Vespers and Litya</p> | <p>6 Transfiguration of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ</p> <p>9:00am Divine Liturgy Blessing of Fruit</p> | <p>7 Valaam Icon</p> | <p>8 Tolga Icon</p> <p>NO VESPERS</p> |
| <p>9 Ven. Herman of Alaska</p> <p>8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p> | <p>10</p> | <p>11</p> <p>NO COUNCIL MEETING</p> | <p>12</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">MYRRH BEARERS ALTAR SOCIETY</p> <p>A reminder that our next meeting date will be Sunday September 13, 2009 following coffee hour.</p> | | <p>13 St. Tikhon, Wonderworker of Zadonsk</p> <p>14 Forefeast Dormition</p> <p>15 Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos</p> <p>NO VESPERS</p> |
| <p>16 Feodorovskaya Icon</p> <p>8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p> | <p>17</p> | <p>18</p> | <p>19 Donskaya Icon</p> | <p>20</p> | <p>21</p> | <p>22 Georgian Icon</p> <p>5:00pm Great Vespers</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Church School</p> <p>It's that time of year! Church School registration forms are available in the narthex. Please complete and return to Stephanie Homyak so that we can begin planning for the new school year.</p>  | | | | | | |
| <p>23 Leavetaking Dormition</p> <p>8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p> | <p>24 Petrovskaya Icon</p> | <p>25</p> | <p>26 Vladimir Icon</p> | <p>27</p> | <p>28 Ven. Job of Pochaev</p> | <p>29 Beheading of St. John the Baptist</p> <p>5:00pm Great Vespers</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">We welcome all of our guests and visitors. Please join us in the Cultural Center for Fellowship Hour following Divine Liturgy each Sunday.</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>30</p> <p>8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p> | <p>31</p> | <p>1 Church New Year Chernigov-Gethsemane Icon</p> | <p>2 Kaluga Icon</p> | <p>3</p> | <p>4 Icon "The Unburnt Bush"</p> | <p>5 Arapetskaya and Kiev-Bratsk Icons</p> <p>FOCA National Convention Hartford, CT</p> <p>5:00pm Great Vespers</p> |