

Orthodox Heights

HolyTrinityOrthodoxChurch.org

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MAY 6, 2018

5th SUNDAY OF PASCHA — Tone 4. Samaritan Woman. Righteous Job the Long-suffering (ca. 2000-1500 B.C.). Ven. Micah, disciple of Ven. Sergius of Radonezh (1385). Martyrs Barbarus the soldier, Bacchus, Callimachus, and Dionysius, in Morea (ca. 362). Martyr Barbarus in Thessaly, who was a robber.

EPISTLE: ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 11.19-26, 29-30: Persecution scattered the faithful, but the Lord blessed their preaching and increased their number.

GOSPEL: John 4.5-42: Many believe because of the woman who met Christ at the well – because she told them to come and hear His words.

LEGACY FUND: It was decided by the Parish Council to establish a Legacy Fund, in order to honor the work of the last 100 years, and provide a stable foundation for the next century in the life of our beloved parish. This designated fund will be for capital improvements and for furthering the ministries of the Parish. Please consider supporting this effort in your giving and estate planning! **Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!**

GRAVE BLESSINGS: As we continue to proclaim the Gospel of the Resurrection, it is custom to bless the graves of those who have gone on in the hope of the resurrection before us. For any of the departed faithful in the various local cemeteries, please see Fr James to schedule a grave blessing. **Χριστὸς ἀνέστη! Ἀληθῶς ἀνέστη!**

PASCHAL LILIES: As we proclaimed Christ is Risen in the church, now you can take some more of that joy into your own homes. The lilies adorning the church are still in wonderful shape and would love a permanent location in your home or garden. For a \$5 donation, one of the plants can be yours. **Χριστος воскрес! Воистину воскрес**

WELCOME VISITORS! We warmly welcome all of our visitors! It's good to have you with us! Please know that we are glad that you are here praying with us and invite you to join us

after the service for a meal and to meet everyone in our community. **Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!**

SANITATION ENGINEERING: In order to be good neighbors, we have installed locks on the dumpster. If you are taking refuse to the receptacle, please get the key from Fr James and deposit the bags inside. Please do not put it on top as this attracts vermin. **Tá Críost éirithe! Go deimhin, tá sé éirithe!**

CEMETERY MAINTENANCE: The season has finally changed, and the grass will soon be growing in earnest. As has become our practice, we will be taking care of the cemetery grass and maintenance through volunteers within the parish. To volunteer for the maintenance rotation, sign up at the table at the back of the nave. **Si Kristo ay nabuhay! Tootoo! Siya nga ay nabuhay!**

DDB APPRECIATION DINNER: As we are both benefactors and recipients of the Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors Program, we have been invited to the annual appreciation dinner. It will be held St Basil's Church in Watervliet, NY on Sunday, June 3rd at 5 PM. If you would like to attend, please see Fr James. **Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!**

FELLOWSHIP SCHEDULE

May 6: Cheplick

May 13: Charlanow & McKane Families

May 20: Speen Family

May 27: Potluck for Pentecost

READERS SCHEDULE

May 5: Antonina M

May 12: Rdr William

May 19: Alexander C

May 26: Sdn Shawn Michael

LIVING:

Archpriest Jason
Archpriest Herman
Archpriest John
Mat. Katherine
Rdr. Thomas
Rdr. David
Theresa Bridget
Kathleen
Infant Hannah
Abigail
Infant Justus
Anna & Family

Leon
Kate
Elizabeth
Kristen
Katherine
Nadezhda
Errin
Helen
Larissa & Family
Janet
CATECHUMEN: None
BIRTHDAYS: Kimberly
ANNIVS: None

NAMESDAYS: None
TRAVELLING: Carol & Christopher

REPOSED:

Archpriest John U
Archpriest Stephen
Priest John B
Deacon Mark H.
Rdr Gregory
Parker
Lindsay
Lucinda
Hannah

Katerina
Child Anthony C
Amanda
Peter

NEWLY REPOSED: Mitred
Archpriest John (4-7)
ANNIVERSARIES: None

BY THE NUMBERS: Last Collection: \$722. Weekly Budget: \$1100.
MTD: \$4794. Monthly Budget: \$4360. March +\$500

SCHEDULE FOR THIS WEEK

CONFESSIONS ARE HEARD BEFORE AND AFTER VESPERS AND AT ANY OTHER CONVENIENT TIME.

SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN, MAY 6: 8:40 Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy, Fellowship Hour and Sunday School

MONDAY, MAY 7: Rector's Sabbath

TUESDAY, MAY 8: 8 AM Morning Prayers

WEDNESDAY, MAY 9: 8 AM Morning Prayers

THURSDAY, MAY 10: 8 AM Morning Prayers

FRIDAY, MAY 11: 8 AM Morning Prayers

SATURDAY, MAY 12: 5 PM Great Vespers

SUNDAY OF THE BLIND MAN, MAY 13: 8:40 Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy, Fellowship Hour and Sunday School

MAY 17: Ascension

MAY 27: Pentecost and Parish Feast Day

A WORD ON REPENTANCE

By St John Maximovitch,



When we are immersed in sins, and our mind is occupied solely with worldly cares, we do not notice the state of our soul. We are indifferent to who we are inwardly, and we persist along a false path without being aware of it. But then a ray of God's Light penetrates our soul. And what filth we see in ourselves! How much untruth, how much falsehood! How hideous many of our actions prove to be, which we fancied to be so wonderful. And it becomes clear to us which is the true path. If we then recognize our spiritual nothingness, our sinfulness, and earnestly desire our amendment - we are near to salvation. From the

depths of our soul we shall cry out to God: "Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy according to Thy mercy!" "Forgive me and save me!" "Grant me to see my own faults and not to judge my brother!"

A SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION OF JACOB'S WELL

By St. Maximus the Confessor

Jacob's well is Scripture. The water is the spiritual knowledge found in Scripture. The depth of the well is the meaning, only to be attained with great difficulty, of the obscure sayings in Scripture.

The bucket is learning gained from the written text of the word of God, which the Lord did not possess because He is the Word Himself; and so He does not give believers the knowledge that comes from learning and study, but grants to those found worthy the ever-flowing waters of wisdom that spill from the fountain of spiritual grace and never run dry. For the bucket - that is to say, learning - can only grasp a very small amount of knowledge and leaves behind all that it cannot lay hold of, however it tries. But the knowledge that is received through grace, without study, contains all the wisdom that man can attain, springing forth in different ways according to his needs.

From *Philokalia*, "Second Century of Various texts," II:193, 194.

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church

Elmira Heights, New York



SUNDAY, MAY 6TH, 2018

SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

ST ALEXIS TOTH, CONFESSOR & DEFENDER OF ORTHODOXY IN AMERICA

Our holy Father Alexis, the defender of the Orthodox Faith and zealous worker in the Lord's vineyard, was born in Austro-Hungary on March 18, 1854 into a poor Carpatho-Russian family. Like many others in the Austro-Hungarian empire, the Toths were Eastern Rite Catholics. Alexis' father and brother were priests and his uncle was a bishop in the Uniate church. He received an excellent education and knew several languages (Carpatho-Russian, Hungarian, Russian, German, Latin, and a reading knowledge of Greek). He married Rosalie Mihalich, a priest's daughter, and was ordained on April 18, 1878 to serve as second priest in a Uniate parish. His wife died soon afterwards, followed by their only child—losses which the saint endured with the patience of Job.

In May, 1879, Father Alexis was appointed secretary to the Bishop of Presov and also Administrator of the Diocesan Administration. He was also entrusted with the directorship of an orphanage. At Presov Seminary, Father Toth taught Church History and Canon Law, which served him well in his later life in America. In October, 1889 he was appointed to serve as pastor of a Uniate parish in Minneapolis, MN.

Upon his arrival in America, Father Alexis presented himself to the local Roman Catholic diocesan authority, Archbishop John Ireland, since there was no Uniate bishop in America at that time. Archbishop Ireland belonged to the party of American Catholics who favored the "Americanization" of all Roman Catholics. His vision for the future was founded on a common faith, customs, and the use of the English language for everything except liturgical celebrations. Naturally, ethnic parishes and non-Latin rite clergy did not fit into this vision. Thus, when Father Toth came to present his credentials, Archbishop Ireland greeted him with open hostility. He refused to recognize him as a legitimate Catholic priest or to grant permission for him to serve in his diocese.

As a historian and professor of Canon Law, Father Toth knew his rights under the terms of the Unia and would not accept Archbishop Ireland's unjust decisions. In October of 1890, there was a meeting of eight of the ten Uniate priests in America at Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania under the chairmanship of Father Toth. By this time the American bishops had written to Rome demanding the recall to Europe of all Uniate priests in America, fearing that Uniate priests and parishes would hinder the assimilation of immigrants into American culture. Uniate bishops in Europe refused to listen to the priests' pleas for help.

Abp Ireland sent a letter to his parishes ordering their members not to attend Father Toth's parish nor to accept any priestly ministrations from him. Expecting imminent deportation, Father Toth explained the situation to his parishioners and suggested it might be best for him to leave and return to Europe.

"No," they said. "Let's go to the Russian bishop. Why should we always submit ourselves to foreigners?" It was decided to write to the Russian consul in San Francisco in order to ask for the name and address of the Russian bishop. Ivan Mlinar went to San Francisco to make initial contact with Bishop Vladimir; then in February, 1891 Father Toth and his church warden, Paul Podany, also made the journey. Subsequently, Bishop Vladimir came to Minneapolis and on March 25, 1891 received Father Toth and 361 parishioners into the Orthodox Church of their ancestors. The parishioners regarded this event as a new Triumph of Orthodoxy, crying out with joy: "Glory to God for His great mercy!"

This initiative came from the people themselves, and was not the result of any coercion from outsiders. The Russian Orthodox Church was unaware of the existence of these Slavic Uniate immigrants to America, but responded positively to their petition to be reunited to the Orthodox Church.

The example of Saint Alexis and his parish in returning to Orthodoxy was an encouragement to hundreds of other Uniates. The ever-memorable one was like a candle upon a candlestick giving light to

others (Mt.5:15), and his flock may be likened to the leaven mixed with meal which leavened the whole (Mt.13:33). Through his fearless preaching he uprooted the tares which had sprung up in the wheat of true doctrine, and exposed the false teachings which had led his people astray. Although he did not hesitate to point out errors in the doctrines of other denominations, he was careful to warn his flock against intolerance. His writings and sermons are filled with admonitions to respect other people and to refrain from attacking their faith.

Although the Minneapolis parish was received into the Orthodox Church in March, 1891, it was not until July, 1892 that the Holy Synod of Russia recognized and accepted the parish into the Diocese of Alaska and the Aleutians. This resolution reached America only in October, 1892. During that time there was a climate of religious and ethnic hostility against the new converts. Father Alexis was accused of selling out his own Carpatho-Russian people and his religion to the "Muscovites" for financial gain.

The righteous one was obliged to work in a bakery in order to support himself. Even though his funds were meager, he did not neglect to give alms to the poor and needy. He shared his money with other clergy worse off than himself, and contributed to the building of churches and to the education of seminarians. He was not anxious about his life (Mt.6:25), what he would eat or drink or wear. Trusting in God to take care of him, Saint Alexis followed the admonition of Our Savior to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Mt.6:33). So he bore the tribulation, slander, and physical attacks with patience and spiritual joy.

Bishops Vladimir, Nicholas, Saint Tikhon, and Platon recognized the special gifts of Father Toth, so they often sent him forth to preach and teach wherever there were people of Slavic background. Even though he was aware of his shortcomings and inadequacies, yet he was obedient to the instructions of the bishops. He did not hesitate or make excuses, but went immediately to fulfill his mission. Saint Alexis visited many Uniate parishes, explaining the differences between Orthodoxy, Protestantism, Roman Catholicism and Uniatism, stressing that the true way to salvation is in Orthodoxy.

Like Josiah, "he behaved himself uprightly in the conversion of his people" (Sir 49:2). He was instrumental in the formation or return of seventeen parishes, planting a vineyard of Christ in America, and increasing its fruitful yield many times over. By 1909, the time of his blessed repose, many thousands of Carpatho-Russian and Galician Uniates had returned to Orthodoxy. This was a major event in the history of the North American Mission. Father Toth's efforts did not go unrecognized in his own lifetime. He received a jeweled miter from the Holy Synod, as well as the Order of Saint Vladimir and the Order of Saint Anna from Czar Nicholas II for distinguished service and devotion to God and country. In 1907, he was considered as a candidate for the episcopal office. He declined this honor, however, humbly pointing out that this responsibility should be given to a younger, healthier man.

At the end of 1908, Saint Alexis' health began to decline due to a complication of illnesses. He went to the shore in south Jersey in an attempt to regain his health, but soon returned to Wilkes-Barre, where he was confined to bed for two months. He reposed on Friday, May 7, 1909. Saint Alexis' love and concern for his spiritual children did not cease with his death. Before closing the account of his life, it would be most appropriate to reveal but one example of his heavenly intercession:

Saint Alexis was a true man of God who guided many Carpatho-Russian and Galician immigrants through the dark confusion of religious challenges in the New World and back to the unity of the Orthodox Church through his grace-filled words and by his holy example. Saint Alexis commended his soul to God's mercy, asking forgiveness from everyone and forgiving everybody. His holy relics now rest at Saint Tikhon Monastery in South Canaan, PA

CHRIST IS RISEN! AND OTHER SALUTATIONS...

by Elissa Bjeletich

Christ is risen! Χριστός Ανέστη! Христос воскрес!

A friend of mine recently grew frustrated with the bored, uninspired way he heard people wishing one another the Paschal greeting: “Christ is risen!” It seems that he’d attended a service where no one seemed to mean it. The priest called it out, and the bored congregation responded mechanically. The glorious news of Lord’s resurrection had become, simply, as he put it, ‘a synonym for hello’.

His irritation immediately brought me back to a moment many years ago, when I was an impertinent non-denominational college student, questioning my Orthodox boyfriend on the sign of the cross. I argued that people were just crossing themselves absent-mindedly, making it an empty gesture, another superfluous piece of tradition that was getting in the way of Jesus.

He looked at me seriously, and thought about it. He admitted that sometimes he wasn’t already in a deep, holy place, and he’d cross himself because it was ‘time’ to cross himself – but that mechanical act would call him to attention, call him to God. Making the sign of the cross, that muscle memory action, would call his brain to order: wake up, and pray now.

Sometimes we are mechanical. Sometimes the action precedes the inspiration — but that’s not always a bad thing.

Indeed, sometimes we find ourselves in a state of ‘spiritual dryness’, in which we are not feeling prayerful as we might at other times — but the advice of the Church is not to wait to pray until you feel it in your heart, but the opposite: pray harder.

“If you do not feel like praying, you have to force yourself. The Holy Fathers say that prayer with force is higher than prayer unforced. You do not want to, but force yourself. The Kingdom of Heaven is taken by force” (Matt. 11:12). — St. Ambrose of Optina (+1891)

Sometimes the action precedes the inspiration; sometimes we must force prayer in our dry state in order to fight our way back to the more fruitful season.

We’re three weeks past Holy Pascha; halfway through the Paschal season. If you are not feeling the ‘Christ is risen!’ when you call it out, don’t stop saying it. Instead, say it more forcefully — think about it, and try to mean it.

“Do not rush one prayer after another but say them with orderly deliberation, as one addressing a great person for a favor. Do not just pay attention to the words, but rather let the mind be in the heart, standing before the Lord in full awareness of His presence, in full consciousness of His greatness and grace and justice.” — St. Theophan the Recluse

Let your mind be in your heart. Stand before the Lord and let yourself go back to that place in your heart where you know what it means to proclaim the resurrection, and next time you call it out, mean it. Until then, let us call you back to it as often as we can.

Christ is risen! Truly, truly, my friends, He really is.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO WORSHIP GOD IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH?

By Sergei V. Bulgakov



In the words: "The hour is coming, and now is, when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth" [John 4], the Lord Jesus Christ points out the distinctive character and features of Christian Divine Services in comparison with Old Testament worship: Christian worship is the highest and fullest worship or service to God, a spiritual and true service in relation to the physical and typological Old Testament service. The Old Testament worship was only the sign of God's covenant with the chosen people and the omen of salvation for all of the human race, which was fulfilled with the advent of Christ. This was, so to say, a will written on parchment, which, as a simple parchment, has no value, but which is precious for the one holding it, because it gives to him the right to receive the valid inheritance in due time. Whoever fulfilled the Old Testament rites with living faith in the coming of a future Redeemer, even though he did not receive the grace of redemption and salvation, but had a faithful pledge of this salvation also might die in the good hope of being a participant in the kingdom of Christ. These are not Christian mysteries: whoever receives them with living faith in the Son of God who came and suffered for us, by that same action also truly receives the grace of deliverance, sanctification and salvation. The divine grace of the All Holy Spirit of God and the all-perfect blessing of the heavenly Father are also bestowed on us in all the sacred deeds of Christians. Therefore both the performing and the participating in the sacred deeds by Christians perform a spiritual service to God and worship the Father in spirit and truth.

Together with these words of the Lord about the worship of God in spirit and in truth means that when praying to God, we should pray with all our being, in both body and spirit; that the words and actions of our prayer be the expression of the valid feelings of our heart, and not the prayer of a solitary individual. The one who prays to God in spirit is the one who, saying the words of a prayer, says them not only with the lips, but with all one's soul and heart; who, protecting himself with the sign of the cross of Christ, looks in spirit at the Lord Himself crucified on the cross; who, bending his neck, bows before God with both his heart and soul; who, prostrating himself to the ground, subjects all of himself into the hand of God in deepest humility and submission of heart, in full devotion to the will of God; who, standing in the flesh before the image of the Lord or His Most Pure Mother, in spirit stands before Him Himself, sitting on the throne of glory, and with His Most Pure Mother standing on His right hand; who, kisses with his lips a holy icon of the Lord, kisses in his heart His most pure hands and feet.