

Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

Albanian Archdiocese - OCA

9230 Old Bustleton Avenue

Philadelphia, PA 19115

215-676-3311

Rev. Nicholas Dellermann – Rector (860-861-7468)

SUNDAY, JUNE 11

1st Sunday after Pentecost

All Saints

Tone 8
Troparion
(Resurrection)

*Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One!
Thou didst accept the three day burial to free us from our sufferings!
O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to Thee!*

Tone 4
Troparion
(All Saints)

*As with fine porphyry and royal purple,
Thy Church has been adorned with Thy martyrs' blood shed throughout all the world.
She cries to Thee, O Christ God: "Send down Thy bounties on Thy people,
grant peace to Thy habitation and great mercy to our souls!"*

Tone 8
Kontakion
(All Saints)

*The universe offers Thee the God-bearing Martyrs as the first fruits of creation, O Lord and Creator.
By their prayers keep Thy Church, Thy habitation, in abiding peace through the Theotokos, O most Merciful One!*

↻ **Prokeimenon** ↻

Tone 8 (Resurrection)

Pray and make your vows / before the Lord, our God! (Ps. 75:10a)

V. In Judah God is known; His Name is great in Israel. (Ps. 75:1)

Tone 4 (All Saints)

God is wonderful in His saints, / the God of Israel. (Ps. 67:35a)



✧ The Epistle Reading ✧

Hebrews 11:33-12:2

who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented – of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrenjve 11:33-12:2

të cilët me anë të besimit mundën mbretëri, punuan drejtësi, fituan premtime, mbyllën gojë luanësh, shuan fuqinë e zjarrit, shpëtuan nga tehu i thikës, morën fuqi nga dobësitë, u bënë të fortë në luftë, thyen ushtritë e të huajve. Gra morën të vdekurit e tyre të ngjallur; edhe të tjerë u munduan, sepse nuk pranuan shpëtimin, që të fitonin një ngjallje më të mirë. Edhe të tjerë u provuan me të përqeshura e me të rrahura, po edhe me të lidhura e me burgime. U vranë me gurë, u sharruan më dysh, u nganë, vdiqën të vranë prej shpate; endeshin lart e poshtë veshur me lëkurë dhensh, e me lëkurë dhish, në nevojë, në shtrëngime, në keqtrajtime, ata për të cilët bota nuk ishte e denjë; – duke u endur nëpër shkretëtira e nëpër male e nëpër shpella e nëpër vrimat e dheut. Edhe këta të gjithë, ndonëse morën dëshmi të mirë me anë të besimit, nuk morën premtimin, sepse Perëndia pati urdhëruar që përpara një gjë më të mirë për ne, që të mos bëhen të përsosur pa ne. Prandaj dhe ne, të rrethuar prej një reje kaq të madhe dëshmitarësh, le të hedhim tej çdo barrë dhe mëkatin që na pushton lehtë, edhe me durim le të vrapojmë në rrugën që është përpara nesh, duke shikuar tek Jisui që është kryet dhe fundi i besimit, i cili për gëzimin që ishte përpara tij duroi kryqin, duke përbuzur turpin, edhe ndenji në të djathtë të fronit të Perëndisë.

К Евреям 11:33-12:2

которые верою побеждали царства, творили правду, получали обетования, заграждали уста львов, угасали силу огня, избегали острия меча, укреплялись от немощи, были крепки на войне, прогоняли полки чужих; жены получали умерших своих воскресшими; иные же замучены были, не приняв освобождения, дабы получить лучшее воскресение; другие испытали поругания и побои, а также узы и темницу, были побиваемы камнями, перепиливаемы, подвергаемы пытке, умирали от меча, скитались в милотях и козьих кожах, терпя недостатки, скорби, озлобления; те, которых весь мир не был достоин, скитались по пустыням и горам, по пещерам и ущельям земли. И все сии, свидетельствованные в вере, не получили обещанного, потому что Бог предусмотрел о нас нечто лучшее, дабы они не без нас достигли совершенства. Посему и мы, имея вокруг себя такое облако свидетелей, свергнем с себя всякое бремя и запинаящий нас грех и с терпением будем проходить предлежащее нам поприще, взирая на начальника и совершителя веры Иисуса, Который, вместо предлежавшей Ему радости, претерпел крест, пренебрегши посрамление, и воссел одесную престола Божия.

Tone 4

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. The righteous cried and the Lord heard them, and delivered them out of all their troubles. (Ps. 33:17)

V. Many are the afflictions of the righteous; the Lord will deliver them out of them all. (Ps. 33:19)



✠ The Gospel Reading ✠

Matthew 10:32-33, 37-38, 19:27-30

Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?" So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

Mattheut 10:32-33, 37-38, 19:27-30

Kushdo, pra, që të më pohojë përpara njerëzve, edhe unë do ta pohoj atë përpara Atit tim që është në qiejt. Por këdo që të më mohojë përpara njerëzve, do ta mohoj edhe unë atë përpara Atit tim që është në qiejt. Ai që do të atin ose të ëmën më tepër se mua, nuk është i denjë për mua; edhe ai që do bir a bijë më tepër se mua, nuk është i denjë për mua. Edhe ai që nuk merr kryqin e tij e nuk vjen pas meje, nuk është i denjë për mua. Atëherë u përgjigj Pjetri e i tha: Ja ne tek i lamë të gjitha, edhe të ndoqëm pas. Vallë, ç'do të jetë për ne? Edhe Jisui u tha: Me të vërtetë po ju them juve, se ju që më ndoqët pas, në krijimin e ri, kur të rrijë i Biri i njeriut mbi fronin e lavdisë së tij, do të rrini edhe ju mbi dymbëdhjetë frone duke gjykuar të dymbëdhjetë fiset e Izraelit. Edhe kushdo që la shtëpi, a vëllezër, a motra, a atë, a nënë, a grua, a bij, a ara, për hir të emrit tim, do të marrë njëqind fish, edhe do të trashëgojë jetë të pasosur. Po shumë të parë do të jenë të fundit, edhe të fundit të parë.

От Матфея 10:32-33, 37-38, 19:27-30

Итак всякого, кто исповедает Меня пред людьми, того исповедаю и Я пред Отцем Моим Небесным; а кто отречется от Меня пред людьми, отрекусь от того и Я пред Отцем Моим Небесным. Кто любит отца или мать более, нежели Меня, не достоин Меня; и кто любит сына или дочь более, нежели Меня, не достоин Меня; и кто не берет креста своего и следует за Мною, тот не достоин Меня. Тогда Петр, отвечая, сказал Ему: вот, мы оставили всё и последовали за Тобою; что же будет нам? Иисус же сказал им: истинно говорю вам, что вы, последовавшие за Мною, -- в пакибытии, когда сядет Сын Человеческий на престоле славы Своей, сядете и вы на двенадцати престолах судить двенадцать колен Израилевых. И всякий, кто оставит дома, или братьев, или сестер, или отца, или мать, или жену, или детей, или земли, ради имени Моего, получит во сто крат и наследует жизнь вечную. Многие же будут первые последними, и последние первыми.

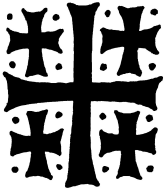
Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! (Ps. 148:1)

Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous; praise befits the just! (Ps. 32:1)

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

The saints are like the Lord, but so are all people who keep the commandments of Christ; but those who live according to their own passions and do not repent are like the devil. I think that if this mystery were revealed to the world, then they would stop serving the devil, and every one would strive to serve the Lord with all his strength, and to be like Him.

PRAYERS	Birthdays, Names-days, & Anniversaries	SCRIPTURE THIS WEEK
<i>For Those Who Have Fallen Asleep</i>		Church Lectionary
<p>Newly Departed Sue, Newly Departed David, Newly departed Miles, Newly Departed child Luke,</p> <p><i>[To be inserted after the petition for the departed]</i> Again we pray for those who have lost their lives because of the war in Ukraine: that the Lord our God may look upon them with mercy, and give them rest where there is neither sickness, or sorrow, but life everlasting.</p>	<p>June 11 – June 17 Allan Heller (B) Tatiana Kuznetsava (B) Marena Rubis (B) Kyprian Dellermann (B)</p> <p><u>Seven-Day Vigil Candles</u></p> <p>Seven-Day Vigil Candles are used for the Eternal Light that hangs above the Royal Doors and are often placed in front of the icons of Christ or the Birth-giver of God. If you would like to donate a Seven-Day Vigil Candle, Please include the name or names of those for whom the candle is donated, and we will place them in this section for special prayers.</p>	<p><u>Today</u> Hebrews 11:33-12:2 Matthew 10:32-33, 37-38, 19:27-30</p>
<i>For Those Who Are Sick And Home-bound</i>		
<p>Virginia, Denise, Olvian, Marie, James, Alexandra, Andrew, Christina, Louise, Porter, Alvin, Tracy, Kathy, Andrew, Maria, Helen, John, Tom, Nina, Sophia, Jim, Spresha, Kristin, Niko, Spiro, Angjeliki, Melod, Olgay, Ruth, Fr. Jerry, Naomi, Terry, Naomi, Annette, Tatiana, Aleena, Lester Jr., Natalia, Otari, Lasha</p>		<p><u>Monday</u> Romans 2:28-3:18 Matthew 6:31-34, 7:9-11</p>
<i>Prayers In General</i>		
<p>Fr. Dennis and his family, Fr. Ioan, Christian, Michael, Erica, Kaida, DuDash family, Michael, Robert, Ally, Steve, Jake and Amanda and their children, Katherine, Ron, Anthony, Volodymyr, Nick, Sophia, Michael, Rafael, Bob, Barbara, Ansley and the child to be born of her, Sandra, Enoch, John, Victoria, Melenie, Grace, Michael, Barbara, Giorgi, Molly, Jim, Chloe</p>		<p><u>Tuesday</u> Romans 4:4-12 Matthew 7:15-21</p>
<p><i>[To be inserted after the petition for the living]</i> Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, for those who are suffering, wounded, grieving, or displaced because of the war in Ukraine.</p>		<p><u>Wednesday</u> Romans 4:13-25 Matthew 7:21-23</p>
<i>[Petitions at Augmented Litany]</i>		
<p>Again we pray for a cessation of the hostilities against Ukraine, and that reconciliation and peace will flourish there, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.</p>		<p><u>Thursday</u> Romans 5:10-16 Matthew 8:23-27</p>
<p>We give thanks to You, O Lord our God, Who in Your mercy and providential care, has called forth Archimandrite NIKODHIM to become a shepherd of wisdom and strength for our Albanian Archdiocese. We ask that You Bless Father NIKODHIM as he readies himself to become our future archpastor so he may:</p>		<p><u>Friday</u> Romans 5:17-6:2 Matthew 9:14-17</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • care for our spiritual well-being, • unite us in a zealous confession of our holy faith, • commit us in loving service to one another in bright witness to the glory of Your holy Name. 		<p><u>Saturday</u> Romans 3:19-26 Matthew 7:1-8</p>
<p>Hear us and have mercy.</p>		<p><u>Reading the Bible in a Year</u></p>
<p>June 11: Proverbs 21-24 June 12: Proverbs 25-28 June 13: Proverbs 29-31 June 14: Eccl 1-4 June 15: Eccl 5-8 June 16: Eccl 9-12 June 17: Song 1-4</p>		
		

The “Radical” Jesus

June 9, 2023 · Fr. Barnabas Powell

It seems fashionable, especially among those who seem to preach a utopian ideology, to claim Jesus was a “radical” that would agree with “us.” As someone whose lived a long life already, I can tell you I’ve



witnessed radicals all claim Jesus was one of them. I watched as the socialists and the communists claimed Jesus was a socialist and a communist. I watched as the “Moral Majority” insisted Jesus was a Regan Republican. I lived through the “Jesus Movement” of the 1970s where we were all convinced Jesus was a long-haired love guru preaching a “contemporary” message that insisted we dump all those “old” hymns for the “love song” sounds of shallow romance!

Yep, it’s all been done before.

And now all kinds of radicals are claiming Jesus as their own. I read recently that someone has insisted

that Jesus was “transgender” and “queer.” Amazing. The more things change, the more they stay the same.

But the older I get the more terrifyingly radical the true message of Jesus really gets. The Message of Normal Orthodoxy puts all these other silly ideologies to shame and insists on an awesome confrontation that will destroy all my preconceived notions! Jesus’ message spells the end of the world, literally! Jesus’ message means your very real “death” to sin and the transformation of you into an eternal companion of God, not some weak, desire-slave bent on living “my truth.”

Look at the Gospel Lesson in Matthew 5:33-41:

The Lord said, “You have heard that it was said to the men of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil. You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, Do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if any one would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well; and if any one forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.”

The message of Jesus starts with dismantling the wrong notions that people have about true religion! He destroys the false “old sayings” that turn out to be too small to actually capture the true message He declares!

The first “old saying” has to do with how we communicate, and this gets to a deeper, internal spiritual poverty all too common in us humans. “Do not swear.” Let your words speak for themselves without the need to “Let me be honest with you...” Does that mean you haven’t been honest with me?

Isn’t it amazing what lengths we humans will go to convince another we are telling the truth about a matter? We even place our right hand on a sacred text when we are testifying in court. But Jesus declares that our inner life should be so committed to authenticity and honesty that we shouldn’t need these “props” to add genuineness to our words. Our communication should flow from such a simple (notice, I didn’t say “easy”) life that a simple “yes” or “no” should be sufficient and our own integrity is so

unquestioned that this answer is always enough.

But that amazing life first requires an inner peace and simplicity that shuns duplicity and manipulation. No wonder the Lord says “Anything more than this comes from evil.”

The second “old saying” deals with our behavior, and this, too, flows from a deeper, inner life and attitude that motivates our actions and choices.

Jesus confronts our cowardly habit of making excuses for revenge or demanding that “I should get what I deserve” or “He should get what he deserves for not giving me what I deserve!”

The Lord offers us such a radically different, and ultimately life-giving freedom, from the slavery of score-keeping and unending revenge! The Lord calls us to be so confident in the resurrection of the dead and His ultimate victory over all injustice that we release all temporary desires to “set things right” for a better life of liberty from anger and grudges and hatred. Even to the point that if you are struck on one cheek, you offer the other cheek to your attacker! The Message of Jesus is to give up keeping score. Give up demanding what you deserve. Stop the never-ending cycle of demands and embrace the freedom of God’s grace and a life that serves! No more ego-driven living! That lifestyle only leads to hell! On this First Friday after Pentecost, we are invited by the Church to witness the transformation of the earliest disciples of Jesus into the radical community that changed the world forever. As the hymn we sing during this time says the Holy Spirit “made fishermen all-wise, sending upon them the Holy Spirit and, through them, netting the world.” This truly radical, not merely incipient narcissism that passes for “radical” today, message and action of the Kingdom of God is meant to radically change you and me into persons who are more at home in eternity than in the passing fads of a fallen society.

Today, is your inner life being shaped by the radical message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Are you free from the inner manipulations of your own deceit? Are you free from the never-ending “score-keeping” of revenge and “Don’t I deserve to be happy?” Can you truly say your life is peaceful and simple? Why not determine to be Orthodox on Purpose and watch as that purposeful life creates this very peace and simplicity within you?

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Blessed are You, O Christ our God, who made fishermen all-wise, sending upon them the Holy Spirit and, through them, netting the world. O Loving One, glory to You.

<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/faithencouraged/2023/06/the-radical-jesus/>

A Single Will for Creation, but Two for Deification

Vladimir Lossky wrote in his book *Orthodox Theology*, “God becomes powerless before human freedom; He cannot violate it since it flows from His own omnipotence. Certainly man was created by the will of God alone; but he cannot be deified [made Holy] by it alone. A single will for creation, but two for deification. A single will to raise up the image, but two to make the image into a likeness. The love of God for man is so great that it cannot constrain; for there is no love without respect. Divine will always will submit itself to gropings, to detours, even to revolts of human will to bring it to a free consent.”

Orthodox Christians believe there is nothing we can do to earn salvation. It is a gift from God and one that must be freely received by us. We are free to reject God because His offer to us is based on relationship and dependent upon our cooperation. God can not force us to accept this relationship since our ultimate deification depends on our responding to the love that has been extended to us by our Creator. All true and loving relationships with God are based on free choice. The liberty of choice is either to receive or reject His love.

With love in Christ,
Abbot Tryphon

<https://abbottryphon.com/deification-2/>

June/July Events

June

- 11 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
14 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets
18 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
21 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets
25 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
Education Sunday
28 – 6:30pm Vespertal Liturgy
Feast of Ss. Peter and Paul

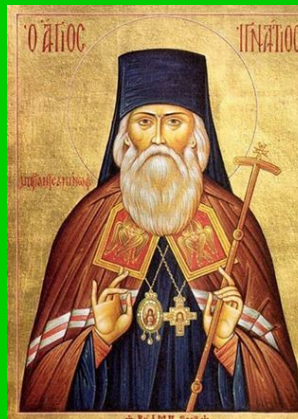
July

- 02 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
Patronal Feast Celebration
05 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets
07 – 6:00pm Fun Night
09 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
12 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets
16 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

Can't join us in person?

We stream our services on our YouTube Channel:

[https://www.youtube.com/@sspeterpaulortho
doxchurcho1810](https://www.youtube.com/@sspeterpaulortho
doxchurcho1810)



*Consolation, comfort,
joy, and other
spiritual gifts
are consequences
of reconciliation.*

*To seek them before
reconciliation is an
undertaking fraught
with indiscretion.*

St. Ignatius Brianchaninov

ALL BAPTIZED CHRISTIANS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR SHARING THE GOSPEL, ROMANIAN HIERARCHS EXHORT

Paris, June 7, 2023

The commission to spread the Gospel to the entire world is the responsibility of every Christian, and not just of ordained clergy, says the Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolis of Western and Southern Europe.

In a pastoral letter issued for the feast of Pentecost, the group of six Romanian hierarchs, headed by His Metropolitan Iosif of Western and Southern Europe, call upon the faithful to be aware of the work of the Spirit within them, to deepen their connection with Christ, and to share this gift with the world.

Recalling that the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles, the hierarchs write that, “Therefore, the mission of preaching the Gospel is a mission specific to the ordained clergy, bishops and priests.”

But at the same time, “this responsibility is, in a certain way, also borne by all the baptized.” And indeed, it was not only the Apostles who helped spread the Gospel throughout the world, but also the Mother of God, the Myrrh-Bearing Women, and many others.

The work of the Holy Spirit has always been directed towards converting the nations, “but the work of the Holy Spirit is also with those within the Church, the baptized, bearers in the world of the work of the Spirit that dwells in them.”

“The baptized person sees and feels a strength and boldness that doesn’t come naturally. Every baptized Christian is guided by the Holy Spirit towards a unique experience of fellowship with Christ, Risen from the dead. From now on, he can’t but share with others this inner wealth, which gives meaning to life,” the hierarchs continue.

From the earliest days of the Church, Christians bore witness to the Risen Christ either through preaching or through their Christian way of life, marked by sacrificial love.

“In the same way, we too cannot fail to see the work of the Holy Spirit manifested in the world and in the Church,” the statement continues.

“With all the difficulties we encounter in our age, both the older and the younger, we have the conviction that the Lord is at the helm of the ship and never abandons us, taking us all to the peaceful harbor of the Kingdom of Heaven.”

Wondrous In His Saints

June 10, 2023 · Fr. Basil

The word for today is “wondrous.” Today on All Saints Sunday we commemorate the saints who have gone before us. And during Matins (Morning Prayer), we sing “God is wondrous in His saints.”^[i] From a worldly viewpoint, we might ask what is “wondrous” about the trials of the saints? What is so glorious about the suffering that we read about in today’s reading of Hebrews 11:33-12:2? Our commentary will explain how the saints are wonderful as they give glory to God.

The Glories of the Saints

In this well-known passage from Hebrews 11, the apostle recounts the astounding examples of the saints of the Old Testament. Through faith these holy ones subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to fight the armies of the alien, etc. ...” (Hebrews 11: 32-34). We praise God for these heroes of the faith today and we remember with thanksgiving countless saints and martyrs for Christ in whom God is glorified.

That “God is wondrous in His saints” sounds the theme of commemoration for this day. It comes from the Septuagint (LXX) Greek version of the Old Testament. The term wondrous means held in awe, marveled, or admired (Strong’s 2296, 113). And The Orthodox Study Bible translates the term (hag’-ee-os) which literally means “holy” or “sanctified.”

The Worthiness of the Saints

The worthiness of the saints is a repeated theme in the New Testament. Paul refers to the Second Coming of Christ as the time “when He comes in glory to be glorified in His saints.” (OSB 2 Thessalonian 1:10). The apostle also prays that “the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you and you in Him (2 Thessalonians 1:12).

But this thought comes from the Lord Jesus Himself who prays to the Father, “I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for these are Yours and all Mine are Yours and yours are Mine and I am glorified in them (OSB John 17:9-10).

The term glorified in these examples means to be exalted in honor, and of high repute (Strong’s #1740 and 1741, 88). The two words wondrous and glorified mutually express the thought of the awesome splendor and grand exaltation of what is worthy of praise. Yet some will ask how those who suffer such deprivation and brutality could be considered so magnificent and their deaths so glorious that the Almighty God is glorified in them. The Matins service answers that by their virtues they “made earth to be ‘heaven-like.’” They lived and died as if they were in heaven and not on earth. So, they brought the hope of heaven down to earth.

By the Surgery of Grace

How did they do this? The song declares that “by the surgery of grace, they removed human passions as healers of mankind.” That is, the saints and martyrs were like surgeons who removed the cancer of the passions from their souls by God’s grace. In this manner, they demonstrated the way of the healing of corruption.

Thus, as the song goes, they “walked the way that led to immortal life.” The Lord Jesus pointed to that path in our Gospel when he said, “Whoever does not take up his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me (OSB Matthew 10:38). Thus, to enter into immortality, we must leave the mortal behind us. This is what the saints did. Obeying the Word of the Lord, they let go of all in this time to grasp the glory of the age to come.

The Matins verses say that they “imitated the death of Christ” and again it says, they “shared in His sufferings.” Accordingly, we honor their trials and martyrdom because they reflected the greater Passion of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we did not think the travails of the saints and martyrs are worthy of special esteem, then we would have to question whether the Lord’s suffering was laudable. If the trials of the saints are not worthy of praise, then we cannot boast in the cross of Christ (Galatians 6:14).

God Is Glorified In Them

However, after Judas has left the Supper to carry out his plan to betray Him, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him” (OSB John 13: 31). The passion of the Lord is the most glorious revelation of God. The saints followed His example, and their tribulations reflected his agonies. Therefore, God is glorified and made wondrous in them.

Of course, from the world’s perspective, they did not accomplish anything. But from the viewpoint of the Kingdom, they achieved everything. They realized the hope we share in resurrection to eternal life. And they made that hope a living reality for us.

And so, we proclaim “God is truly wondrous in His saints” (Psalm 67:36; The Service of Matins). St. John Chrysostom wrote that he often felt sad when hearing the lives of the saints. When he compared himself to them, he said that even in his dreams he had not experienced what the saints had gone through; “not paying the penalty of sins, always doing rightly, and yet always afflicted” (Chrysostom, Home 28 on Hebrews 11:1-4). As the saints glorified God so we glorify them this Sunday. We should not be disheartened by their valiant testimony of the faith but rather encouraged by them. For they surround us as a great cloud of witnesses to accept our cross with them and follow the Crucified Christ from death to the glory of life eternal.

For Reflection

“What does the daily invocation of the saints signify... different ones each day, during the whole year, and during our whole life? It signifies that God’s saints — as our brethren, but perfect — live, and are near us, ever ready to help us, by the grace of God. We live together with them in the house of our Heavenly Father, only in different parts of it. We live in the earthly, they in the heavenly half; but we can converse with them, and they with us. God’s saints are near to the believing heart and are ready in a moment to help those who call upon them with faith and love.” — Saint John of Kronstadt, “My Life in Christ.”