

# Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

Albanian Archdiocese - OCA

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

**SUNDAY, JULY 16**

**6th Sunday after Pentecost**

**Commemoration of the Holy Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils**

**Tone 5  
Troparion  
(Resurrection)**

*Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word,  
co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit,  
born for our salvation from the Virgin;  
for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the  
flesh,  
to endure death,  
and to raise the dead  
by His glorious Resurrection.*

**Tone 8  
Troparion  
(Fathers)**

*Thou art most glorious, O Christ our God,  
Who hast established the Holy Fathers as lights  
on the earth.  
Through them Thou hast guided us to the True  
Faith.  
O greatly compassionate One, glory to Thee!*

**Tone 5  
Kontakion  
(Resurrection)**

*Thou didst descend into hell, O my Savior,  
shattering its gates as Almighty,  
resurrecting the dead as Creator,  
and destroying the sting of death.  
Thou hast delivered Adam from the curse, O  
Lover of man,  
and we cry to Thee: "O Lord, save us!"*

**Tone 8  
Kontakion  
(Fathers)**

*The Apostles' preaching and the Fathers' doctrines  
have established one Faith for the Church.  
Adorned with the robe of truth, woven from  
heavenly theology,  
It defines and glorifies the great mystery of piety.*

**Prokeimenon**

**Tone 5 (Resurrection)**

Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us / and preserve us from this generation forever. (Ps. 11:7)

V. Save me, O Lord, for there is no longer any that is godly! (Ps. 11:1a)

**Tone 4 (Song of the Three Holy Children)**

Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers, / and praised and glorified is Thy Name forever!

(Song of the Three Holy Children, v. 3)

## The Epistle Reading

### **Romans 12:6-14**

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

### **Romanëve 12:6-14**

Edhe kemi dhurata të ndryshme sipas hirit që na u dha; në kemi profeci, le të profetizojmë sipas pjesës së besimit që na takon; ose shërbesë, le të qëndrojmë në shërbesë; kush është mësues, le të jepet pas mësimit; kush ka dhuratën e këshillimit, le të japë këshilla; kush jep, le të japë me thjeshtësi; kush është i parë, le të jetë me kujdes; kush përdëllen, le të përdëllejë me gaz. Dashuria le të jetë pa shtirje; urreni të ligën, ngjituni pas së mirës. Të doni fort njëri-tjetrin me dashuri vëllazërore; kalojeni në nderim njëri-tjetrin. Në punë të jeni të papërtueshëm, në shpirt të nxehtë; Zotit t'i shërbeni. Në shpresë të gëzoheni; në shtrëngim të duroni; në lutje të qëndroni; në nevojat e shenjtëve të ndihmoni; nga mikpritja mos hiqni dorë. Bekoni ata që ju përndjekin; bekonit e mos mallkoni.

### **К Римлянам 12:6-14**

И как, по данной нам благодати, имеем различные дарования, [то], [имеешь ли] пророчество, [пророчествуй] по мере веры; [имеешь ли] служение, [пребывай] в служении; учитель ли, --в учении; увещатель ли, увещевай; раздаватель ли, [раздавай] в простоте; начальник ли, [начальствуй] с усердием; благотворитель ли, [благотвори] с радушием. Любовь [да будет] непритворна; отвращайтесь зла, прилепляйтесь к добру; будьте братолюбивы друг к другу с нежностью; в почтительности друг друга предупреждайте; в усердии не ослабевайте; духом пламенейте; Господу служите; утешайтесь надеждою; в скорби [будьте] терпеливы, в молитве постоянны; в нуждах святых принимайте участие; ревнуйте о странноприимстве. Благословляйте гонителей ваших; благословляйте, а не проклинаяте.

### **Tone 5**

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. I will sing of Thy mercies, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim Thy truth from generation to generation. *(Ps. 88:1-2)*

V. For Thou hast said: Mercy will be established forever; Thy truth will be prepared in the heavens. *(Ps. 88:3)*

### **Tone 1**

V. The Lord, the God of gods, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. *(Ps. 49:1)*

## **Hieromartyr Athenogenes, Bishop of Heracleopolis, and his ten disciples**

Hieromartyr Athenogenes and his Ten Disciples suffered for Christ during the persecution of Christians in the city of Sebastea in Cappadocia. The governor Philomachos arranged a large festival in honor of the pagan gods and called upon the citizens of Sebastea to offer sacrifice to the idols. Most of the inhabitants of Sebastea were Christians, and refused to participate in the impious celebration. Soldiers were ordered to kill those who resisted, and so many Christians received a martyr's crown.

It came to the governor's attention that Christianity was spreading because of the grace-filled preaching of Bishop Athenogenes. Soldiers were ordered to find the Elder and arrest him. Bishop Athenogenes and ten of his disciples lived in a small monastery not far from the city. The soldiers did not find the bishop there, so they arrested his

*Continued on page 3*

## ✠ The Gospel Reading ✠

### **Matthew 9:1-8**

So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city. Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you." And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!" But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" – then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." And he arose and departed to his house. Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.

### **Mattheut 9:1-8**

Edhe ja tek i prunë një të paralizuar të dergjur mbi shtrat; edhe Jisui si pa besimin e tyre, i tha të paralizuarit: Merr zemër, o bir, të janë falur mëkatet. Edhe ja ca nga shkruarit tek thanë me veten e tyre: Ky po blasfemon. Edhe Jisui si pa mendimet e tyre, tha: Përse mendoni ju ligësira në zemrat tuaja? Sepse çështje më lehtë, të them: T'u falën mëkatet; apo të them: Ngrihu e ec? Po që ta dini se i Biri i njeriut ka pushtet mbi dhe të falë mëkate, – atëherë i thotë të paralizuarit: – Çohu, ngri shtratin tënd, edhe shko në shtëpinë tënde. Edhe ai u ngrit edhe shkoi në shtëpinë e tij. Edhe turmat, kur panë, u çuditën, edhe lavdëruan Perëndinë, që u dha njerëzve një pushtet të këtillë.

### **От Матфея 9:1-8**

Тогда Он, войдя в лодку, переправился [обратно] и прибыл в Свой город. И вот, принесли к Нему расслабленного, положенного на постели. И, видя Иисус веру их, сказал расслабленному: дерзай, чадо! прощаются тебе грехи твои. При сем некоторые из книжников сказали сами в себе: Он богохульствует. Иисус же, видя помышления их, сказал: для чего вы мыслите худое в сердцах ваших? ибо что легче сказать: прощаются тебе грехи, или сказать: встань и ходи? Но чтобы вы знали, что Сын Человеческий имеет власть на земле прощать грехи, --тогда говорит расслабленному: встань, возьми постель твою, и иди в дом твой. И он встал, [взял постель свою] и пошел в дом свой. Народ же, видев это, удивился и прославил Бога, давшего такую власть человекуам.

### **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!

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disciples. The governor ordered that they be bound with chains and thrown into prison.

Saint Athenogenes was arrested when he came to Sebastea to inform the judge that those who had been jailed were innocent. While in prison, Saint Athenogenes encouraged his spiritual children for their impending struggle. Led forth to trial, all the holy martyrs confessed themselves Christians and refused to offer sacrifice to idols.

After undergoing fierce tortures, the disciples of the holy bishop were beheaded. After the execution of the disciples, the executioners were ordered to torture the bishop. Strengthened by the Lord, Saint Athenogenes underwent the tortures with dignity. His only request was that he be executed in the monastery.

Taken to his own monastery, the saint gave thanks to God, and he rejoiced in the sufferings that he had undergone for Him. Saint Athenogenes asked that the Lord would forgive the sins of all those who would remember both him and his disciples.

The Lord granted the saint to hear His Voice before death, announcing the promise given to the penitent thief: "Today you shall be with Me in Paradise." The hieromartyr willingly bent his neck beneath the sword.

| PRAYERS  | Birthdays, Names-days, & Anniversaries  | SCRIPTURE THIS WEEK   |
|--|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><i>For Those Who Have Fallen Asleep</i></p>   |   |   |
| <p>Newly Departed Thomas, Newly Departed Nikoli, Newly Departed Sue, David, Alice, Mary, Andrew, Anna, Francis</p> <p><i>[To be inserted after the petition for the departed]</i><br/>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>July 16 – July 22<br/>Marena Rubis (N)<br/>Margarita Rubis (N)<br/>Mariya Zaychik (B)<br/>Ilia Rubis (N)</p> <p><b><u>Seven-Day Vigil Candles</u></b></p> <p>Llukan Dylgjeri - health</p>  | <p><b><u>Church Lectionary</u></b></p> <p><i>Today</i><br/>Hebrews 13:7-16<br/>John 17:1-13<br/>Romans 12:6-14<br/>Matthew 9:1-8</p>  |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><i>For Those Who Are Sick And Home-bound</i></p>  |   |   |
| <p>Virginia, Denise, Olvian, Marie, James, Alexandra, Andrew, Christina, Louise, Porter, Alvin, Tracy, Kathy, Andrew, Maria, Helen, John, Nina, Sophia, Jim, Spresha, Kristin, Niko, Spiro, Angjeliki, Melod, Olgay, Ruth, Fr. Jerry, Naomi, Terry, Naomi, Annette, Tatiana, Aleena, Lester Jr., Natalia, Otari, Lasha, Fr. Nikolas, Imani, Gabriel, Aaron, Jordany, Nassan,</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><i>Monday</i><br/>1 Corinthians 5:9-6:11<br/>Matthew 13:54-58</p>  |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Prayers In General</i></p>   |   |   |
| <p>The community of Ss. Peter &amp; Paul Miami, 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 newborn Baylor, Sandra, Enoch, John, Victoria, Melenie, Grace, Michael, Barbara, Giorgi, Molly, Jim, Chloe,</p>  |   | <p><i>Tuesday</i><br/>1 Corinthians 6:20-7:12<br/>Matthew 14:1-13</p> <p><i>Wednesday</i><br/>Galatians 5:22-6:2<br/>Luke 6:17-23<br/>1 Corinthians 7:12-24<br/>Matthew 14:35-15:11</p> <p><i>Thursday</i><br/>James 5:10-20<br/>Luke 4:22-30<br/>1 Corinthians 7:24-35<br/>Matthew 15:12-21</p>  |
| <p><i>[To be inserted after the petition for the living]</i><br/>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><i>[Petitions at Augmented Litany]</i><br/>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>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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• care for our spiritual well-being,</li> <li>• unite us in a zealous confession of our holy faith,</li> <li>• commit us in loving service to one another in bright witness to the glory of Your holy Name.</li> </ul> <p>Hear us and have mercy.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>COFFEE HOUR</b></p> <p><b>July</b><br/>09 Mariya Zaychik<br/>16 Mary Jaxheimer<br/>23<br/>30</p> <p>Coffee Hour is a wonderful chance for us to get together to break bread and spend time with each other, to celebrate those whom we have held memorials for, and to come together as the family of God outside of worship. To sign up, to host a coffee hour, contact Fr. Nicholas or Donna Bacon.</p> | <p><i>Friday</i><br/>1 Corinthians 7:35-8:7<br/>Matthew 15:29-31</p> <p><i>Saturday</i><br/>Romans 12:1-3<br/>Matthew 10:37-11:1</p> <p><b><u>Reading the Bible in a Year</u></b></p> <p>July 16: Jeremiah 45-48<br/>July 17: Jeremiah 49-52<br/>July 18: Lamentations<br/>July 19: Ezekiel 1-4<br/>July 20: Ezekiel 5-8<br/>July 21: Ezekiel 9-12<br/>July 22: Ezekiel 13-16</p> |

## Living Temporary Lives

July 13, 2023 · Fr. Barnabas Powell



Orthodox Christianity is an eschatological religion!

*O, Mr. Fancy pants with your big words!*

Ok, Orthodoxy is the Faith that keeps eternity in mind and the ultimate victory of Christ over all darkness. Is that better? Ok, let me add more: Orthodoxy is the Faith, the Way of Life, that always reorients me and my life towards Eternity and not

enslaved to the temporary.

Orthodoxy insists I stretch my perspective and focus to take in all God wants me to be!

In fact, the reality that eternity is more real than these temporary events is seen in how we worship, how we pray, how we deal with suffering, and how we live our lives. The power of a Faith that keeps eternal reality in mind is that this makes every moment of my life meaningful. And this eternal perspective actually forms and shaped me to deal with temporary things in the proper perspective.

Look at our lesson today in Hebrews 2:2-10:

*Brethren, if the message declared by angels was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his own will. For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. It has been testified somewhere, "What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou carest for him? Thou didst make him for a little while lower than the angels, thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under his feet." Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. But we see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for every one. For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering.*

St. Paul mentions "the message declared by angels" in the first part of our pericope today. And he mentions this specifically because he's writing to Jews who have embraced Christianity and are now thinking of abandoning Christianity and returning to Judaism. He's trying to tell these persecuted brethren not to give up, and he uses their confidence in the reality of the unseen world as a way to show them they are better off staying with Christ.

The whole of the Law was delivered to Moses by God Himself. But the Hebrew scriptures are filled with accounts of angels bringing messages to people like Abraham and the 3 angels visiting him before the



destruction of Sodom; Jacob wrestles an angel and he sees angels in his dream at Bethel; the prophet Daniel is visited by angels, and even the Archangel Gabriel appears to the Theotokos to announce the coming of Christ. The Jews believed in the unseen world and that meant that they had to be reminded of this when they were considering leaving the Faith due to persecution.

You see, persecution of the physical body is temporary. Troubles are temporary. Our lives are temporary. But we were created to be the eternal companions of our Creator, so being able to discern between the temporary and the eternal is absolutely necessary if I am ever going to enjoy the eternal life that has already been given to me because of Jesus Christ and His resurrection. If I put my best energies into temporary things, I show the whole universe I am foolish and short-sighted. But, if I embrace the timeless wisdom of the Orthodox Way of Life, then my perspective towards the temporary will change. I won't be captured by the shallow temptations of momentary gratification or lust or greed or selfish narcissism. No, the Way of Orthodoxy will acclimate me to the atmosphere of eternity and I will make choices, and set priorities, based on eternal wisdom.

Paul reminds these Hebrews that Jesus was made "a little lower" than the angels "for a little while" so that He could come and fill up and repair a broken and fallen humanity with Himself and restore us to the place we were created to inhabit in the first place! And the powerful miracle is He did this through His TEMPORARY suffering!

Just to prove to you that Orthodoxy focuses us on Eternity and away from the merely Temporary, today we remember all the miracles of the great Archangel Gabriel. Imagine that, in the Church calendar we don't just celebrate the lives of the human heroes of the Faith but also be "bodiless powers" as the Church calls the heavenly hosts. The Archangel Gabriel is busy serving and ministering to the Body of Christ from ancient times to even today. This great Archangel and servant of God uses his God-given power and authority to announce the coming of the Messiah to the Blessed Theotokos. But this great servant and friend of the Church shows up many times after the Ascension of Jesus to ministry miracles for the Church. If the Church calendar celebrates both earthly and heavenly beings for the Grace of God shown through them, then we can't forget that eternity is our natural home, not some timebound troubles that come and go!

Today, are you living your life based on temporary things? Do you find yourself gripped by worry and concern for things that won't last forever? The key to freedom from this depressing focus on the temporary is to look up and see that Christ has called you to eternal life! By being Orthodox on Purpose you will be made able to think from an eternal perspective. And that's better!

### Prayer for the Week

**O Commanders of the Heavenly Host, we the unworthy beseech you, that through your entreaties you will fortify us, guarding us in the shelter of the wings of your ethereal glory, even as we fervently bow before you crying: "Deliver us from all danger, as Commanders of the Powers on high! "**

<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/faithencouraged/2023/07/living-temporary-lives/>

***Thus says the Lord, the one who created you, who formed you: "Do not be afraid, for I have delivered you. I have called you by your name, and you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overcome you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. You are precious in my sight, and I love you. Do not be afraid -- for I am with you."***

*(Isaiah 43:1-6)*

## June/July Events

### July

16 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy  
19 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets  
23 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy  
26 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets  
30 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

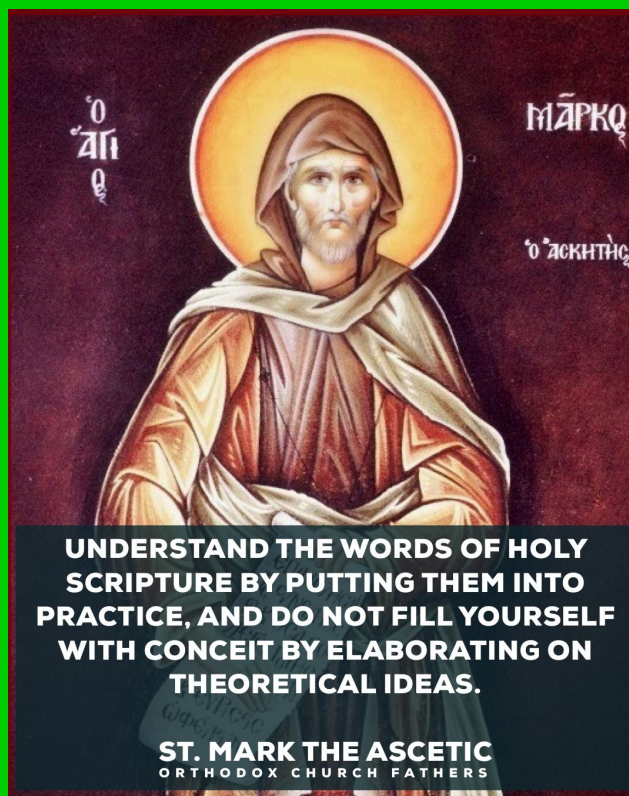
### August

02 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets  
06 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy  
*Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord*  
09 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets  
11 – 6:00pm Fun Night  
13 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy  
15 – 9:00am Divine Liturgy  
*Feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos*  
16 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets  
20 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy  
23 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets  
27 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy  
30 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets

#### Can't join us in person?

We stream our services on our YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@sspeterpaulorthodoxchurch01810>



### Being Orthodox in a Non-Orthodox World

In this pluralistic society there are many Orthodox individuals who've found themselves sharing their lives with non-Orthodox family members. Sometimes these families are not even practicing Christians, so the struggle to keep to the traditions and practices of the Orthodox Faith can be difficult. Lenten periods can be especially hard when the whole family is eating meat, eggs and dairy, while the Orthodox member is required by the Church to fast.

Even the blessing prayers before each meal can be awkward when other members of one's household are not believers. There are also those Sunday mornings or feast days when other members of one's family want to head for the beach, but you're needing to be in church for the Divine Liturgy. The difficulty of being true to one's faith can be even more difficult if your family members hold anti-religious sentiments.

I remember an uncle who was so hostile towards religion that he forbade my aunt and cousins to attend church. Although he was an extreme example, there are many Orthodox Christians who struggle to live their faith in an environment that is not conducive to the spiritual life. This hostility towards our Orthodox Christian faith can also even carry over into the workplace. A goodly number of employers do not let Orthodox Christians take time off for holy days, or even major feast days such as the Nativity of Christ.

When we are committed to Christ we must not allow others to keep us from practicing our faith. Although it is not necessary to be in their face about our faith, it is important that we remember the example of the early Christians. They were so committed to Christ that they willingly faced martyrdom rather than deny their faith, or compromise Christian principles.

It has been my experience that many individuals who deny the importance of religion in their lives have, in reality, simply been turned off to religiosity. They've seen a form of Christianity that is disingenuous and have therefore discounted Christianity all together. Others see Christians as judgmental and self-righteous, and are therefore turned off to any religious expression.

What to do! First of all we must not hide our faith under any circumstances. This does not mean that we are preachy or self-righteous. A Christian who is grateful for their faith is also compassionate toward those who have no faith. Giving a loving

witness to Christ while following the dictates of our Orthodox traditions is a good starting point.

If we are seated at the dinner table with unbelievers, it is important that we not be showy about our faith, but also important that we not hide the fact that we are Orthodox Christians. Making a simple sign of the cross over ourselves before we eat expresses not only our gratitude towards God for our food, but gives quiet witness to our willingness to truly live our lives in open love of our Saviour. The Lord said if we deny Him before men, He will deny us before the Father. Keeping the traditions of our faith, staying true to the fast periods and making an effort to attend Liturgy on a weekly basis is absolutely necessary if we are to grow spiritually.

Most importantly, our dedication to our faith and a willingness to give witness to our love of Christ can have a huge impact on those around us. If our love of the Saviour translates into love of family and neighbor, those around us will see that our God is real, and our Orthodox faith is truly a way of life, one that actually transforms our nature. When people see that we are filled with joyous living and not judging others, they in turn will want what we have. The Pearl of Great Price can be theirs as well!

With love in Christ,  
Abbot Tryphon

<https://abbottryphon.com/faith-in-a-secular-world-2/>

## ALBANIA: AFTER 30 YEARS, STATE FINALLY RETURNS TIRANA CHURCH THAT WAS TURNED INTO A RESTAURANT

Tirana, Albania, July 11, 2023

All Photos: [orthodoxianewsagency.gr](http://orthodoxianewsagency.gr)



After more than 30 years of bureaucracy and great patience, the Albanian Orthodox Church is celebrating the return of another one of its churches.

The 17th-century St. Procopios Church in the capital city of Tirana was seized by the communist regime of Enver Hoxha, who ruled Albania from 1944 until his death in 1985, and turned into a restaurant.

But finally, the building has been returned to the Church, and on July 8, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in honor of its patron saint, the Great Martyr Procopios of Caesarea, reports the Orthodoxia News Agency.

The St. Procopios Church, which had

been turned into a restaurant.

The feast was served by His Grace Bishop Asti of Byllis, vicar of the Archdiocese of Tirana, together with clergy of the diocese. The primate of the Albanian Church, His Beatitude Metropolitan Anastasios, was also present.

The St. Procopios Church is one of many that were seized and repurposed as places of entertainment under the communist regime. Located within the Tirana Park, the authorities decided to turn the church into a restaurant, and thus it escaped the fate of many other churches that were simply destroyed.



Since the fall of communism in Albania 30 years ago, the revived Church has been in a struggle with the state to get its own property back. The Archbishop referenced these difficulties in his short speech at the feast, calling the faithful to praise God for the great joy of the return of one more church.

He recalled how the Church held a procession from the Annunciation Church to the St. Procopios Church 30 years ago, when it was still a restaurant. They told the employees of the restaurant that the Church would help them find new jobs. However, the state gave the Church many problems, and the church and plot of land weren't returned to the Albanian Church until this year.

And while giving thanks for the St. Procopios Church, Abp.

Anastasios also emphasized that the state continues to hold a considerable number of Church properties, 30 years after the fall of the communist government.