

Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

Albanian Archdiocese - OCA

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

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

16th Sunday after Pentecost

Holy Protomartyr and Equal-to-the-Apostles Thecla

Holy New Martyrs of Alaska, Hieromonk Juvenaly and Peter the Aleut

Tone 7
Troparion
(Resurrection)

*By Thy Cross Thou didst destroy death.
To the thief Thou didst open Paradise.
For the Myrrhbearers Thou didst change weeping
into joy,
and Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ
God,
to proclaim that Thou art risen,
granting the world great mercy.*

Tone 4
Troparion
(New Martyrs)

*Today Alaska rejoices and America celebrates,
for the New World has been sanctified by
martyrdom.
Kodiak echoes with songs of thanksgiving,
Iliamna and Kenai observe the festival of faith.
The apostle and martyr Juvenaly is glorified,
and Peter the Aleut is exalted by his voluntary
sacrifice.
In their devotion and love for the Lord
they willingly endured persecution and death for
the truth.
Now in the kingdom of heaven they intercede for
our souls.*

Tone 7
Kontakion
(Resurrection)

*The dominion of death can no longer hold men
captive,
for Christ descended, shattering and destroying
its powers.
Hell is bound, while the Prophets rejoice and cry:
“The Savior has come to those in faith;
enter, you faithful, into the Resurrection!”*

Tone 4
Kontakion
(New Martyrs)

*Today Valaam joins Alaska in celebrating this
joyous feast,
as her spiritual son Juvenaly embraces the New-
Martyr Peter with love.
Together they suffered for the Lord in America
and united the Old World with the New by their
voluntary sacrifice.
Now forever they stand before the King of glory
and intercede for our souls.*

Tone 7 (Resurrection)

The Lord shall give strength to His people. / The Lord shall bless His people with peace. (Ps. 28:11)
 V. Offer to the Lord, O you sons of God! Offer young rams to the Lord! (Ps. 28:1a)

Tone 4 (New Martyrs)

The Lord has shown the wonders of His will / to the saints who are in His land. (Ps. 15:3a)

Protomartyr and Equal of the Apostles Thekla

The Holy Protomartyr and Equal of the Apostles Thekla was born in the city of Iconium. She was the daughter of rich and illustrious parents, and she was distinguished by extraordinary beauty. At eighteen years of age they betrothed her to an eminent youth. But after she heard the preaching of the holy Apostle Paul about the Savior, Saint Thekla with all her heart came to love the Lord Jesus Christ, and she steadfastly resolved not to enter into marriage, but rather to devote all her life to preaching the Gospel.

Saint Thekla's mother was opposed to her daughter's plans and insisted that she marry her betrothed. Saint Thekla's fiancé also complained to the prefect of the city about the Apostle Paul, accusing him of turning his bride against him. The prefect locked up Saint Paul in prison.

During the night Saint Thekla secretly ran away from her house, and she bribed the prison guards, giving them all her gold ornaments, and so made her way into the prison to the prisoner. For three days she sat at the feet of the Apostle Paul, listening to his fatherly precepts. Thekla's disappearance was discovered, and servants were sent out everywhere looking for her. Finally, they found her in the prison and brought her home by force.

At his trial Saint Paul was sentenced to banishment from the city. Again they urged Saint Thekla to consent to the marriage, but she would not change her mind. Neither the tears of her mother, nor her wrath, nor the threats of the prefect could separate Saint Thekla from her love for the Heavenly Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Her mother in a insane rage demanded from the judges a death sentence against her unyielding daughter, and Saint Thekla was sentenced to be burned. Without flinching, the holy martyr went into the fire and made the Sign of the Cross over herself. At this moment the Savior appeared to her, blessing her present deed, and inexpressible joy filled her holy soul.

The flames of the fire shot up high, but the martyr was surrounded by a light and the flames did not touch her. Thunder boomed, and a strong downpour of rain and hail extinguished the fire. The torturers scattered in fear. Saint Thekla, kept safe by the Lord, left the city and with the help of a certain Christian youth, searched for the Apostle Paul. The holy apostle and his companions, among whom was Saint Barnabas, were hidden in a cave not far from the city, praying fervently, that the Lord would strengthen Saint Thekla in her sufferings.

After this, Saint Thekla went with them preaching the Gospel in Antioch. In this city she was pursued by a certain dignitary named Alexander, who was captivated by her beauty. Saint Thekla refused his offer of marriage, and so she was condemned to death for being a Christian. Twice they set loose hungry wild animals upon her, but they would not touch the holy virgin. Instead, they lay down meekly and licked her feet.

The Providence of God preserved the holy martyr unharmed through all her torments. Finally, they tied her to two oxen and began to chase her with red-hot rods, but the strong cords broke asunder like cobwebs, and the oxen ran off, leaving Saint Thekla unharmed. The people began shouting, "Great is the God of the Christians!" The prefect himself became terrified, realizing that the holy martyr was being kept safe by the Almighty God, Whom she served. He then gave orders to set free the servant of God Thekla.

With the blessing of the Apostle Paul, Saint Thekla then settled in a desolate region of Isaurian Seleucia and dwelt there for many years, constantly preaching the Word of God and healing the sick through her prayer. Saint Thekla converted many pagans to Christ, and the Church appropriately names her as "Equal-to-the-Apostles." Even a pagan priest, trying to assault her purity and punished for his impudence, was brought by her to holy Baptism. More than once the Enemy of the race of man tried to destroy Saint Thekla through people blinded by sin, but the power of God always preserved this faithful servant of Christ.



✠ The Epistle Reading ✠

2 Corinthians 6:1-10

We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard You, and in the day of salvation I have helped You." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed. But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

II Korinthianëve 6:1-10

Edhe si bashkëpunëtorë me të, ju lutemi juve të mos e prisni më kot hirin e Perëndisë. Sepse thotë: "Në kohë të pëlqyer të dëgjova ty, edhe në ditë shpëtimi të ndihmova ty"; ja tani tek është kohë e pëlqyeshme; ja tani tek është ditë shpëtimi. Në asgjë nuk japim asnjë pengesë, që të mos qortohet shërbesa jonë. Por në çdo gjë e rekomandojmë veten tonë si shërbëtorë të Perëndisë, me shumë durim, në shtrëngime, në nevoja, në pikëllime, në rrahje, në burgje, në turbullira, në mundime, në pagjumësi, në agjërime; në pastërti, në urtësi, në zemërgjerësi, në mirësi, në Frymë të Shenjtë, në dashuri pa shtirje; në fjalë të së vërtetës, në fuqi të Perëndisë; me armët e drejtësisë në dorën e djathtë e në të majtën; në lavdi e në çnderim, në emër të mirë e në emër të keq; porsimashtrues, po të vërtetë; porsitë panjohur, po të njohur mirë; porsiduke vdekur, po ja tek rrojmë; porsitë munduar, po jo të vrarë; porsitë hidhëruar, po gjithnjë të gëzuar; porsitë vobektë, po shumë veta pasurojmë; porsiskamës, po të gjitha i zotërojmë.

2-е Коринфянам 6:1-10

Мы же, как споспешники, умоляем вас, чтобы благодать Божия не тщетно была принята вами. Ибо сказано: во время благоприятное Я услышал тебя и в день спасения помог тебе. Вот, теперь время благоприятное, вот, теперь день спасения. Мы никому ни в чем не полагаем претыкания, чтобы не было порицаемо служение, но во всем являем себя, как служители Божии, в великом терпении, в бедствиях, в нуждах, в тесных обстоятельствах, под ударами, в темницах, в изгнаниях, в трудах, в бдениях, в постах, в чистоте, в благоразумии, в великодушии, в благости, в Духе Святом, в нелицемерной любви, в слове истины, в силе Божией, с оружием правды в правой и левой руке, в чести и бесчестии, при порицаниях и похвалах: нас почитают обманщиками, но мы верны; мы неизвестны, но нас узнают; нас почитают умершими, но вот, мы живы; нас наказывают, но мы не умираем; нас огорчают, а мы всегда радуемся; мы нищи, но многих обогащаем; мы ничего не имеем, но всем обладаем.

Tone 7

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Thy Name, O Most High. (Ps. 91:1)

V. To declare Thy mercy in the morning, and Thy truth by night. (Ps. 91:2a)

Tone 4

V. The righteous cried and the Lord heard them, and He delivered them from all their afflictions. (Ps. 33:17)

Continued from page 2

When Saint Thekla was already a ninety-year-old woman, pagan sorcerers became incensed at her for treating the sick for free. They were unable to comprehend that the saint was healing the sick by the power of the grace of Christ, and they presumed that the virgin-goddess Artemis was her special helper. Envious of Saint Thekla, they sent their followers to defile her. When they came near her, Saint Thekla cried out for help to Christ the Savior, and a rock split open and hid the holy virgin, the bride of Christ. Thus did Saint Thekla offer up her holy soul to the Lord.

✠ The Gospel Reading ✠

Luke 5:1-11

So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.

Llukait 5:1-11

Edhe ndërsa turma ishte duke e shtrënguar atë që të dëgjonin fjalën e Perëndisë, ai qëndronte pranë liqenit Gjenisaret. Edhe pa dy lundra duke qëndruar pranë bregut të liqenit; edhe peshkatarët dolën nga ato, e lanin rrjetat. Edhe ai hyri në njëren nga lundrat, në atë të Simonit, dhe i kërkoi atij të largohej pak prej tokës. Edhe si ndenji mësonde turmën nga lundra. Edhe si pushoi së foluri, i tha Simonit: Sill lundrën në ujëra të thella, dhe hidhni rrjetat tuaja për të zënë peshq. Edhe Simoni u përgjigj e i tha: Mjeshtër, gjithë natën u munduam, dhe nuk zumë gjë; po për fjalën tënde do ta hedh rrjetën. Edhe si bënë këtë, mbyllën brenda një mori të madhe peshqish, edhe rrjeta e tyre po çahet. Edhe u bënë me shenjë shokëve që ishin në lundrën tjetër, që të vinin e t'u ndihmonin; edhe ata erdhën, edhe mbushën të dy lundrat, kaq sa ato po fundoseshin. Edhe Simon Pjetri, kur pa, ra në gjunjët e Jisuit, duke thënë: Dil prej meje, Zot, sepse jam njeri mëkatar. Sepse habi e pushtoi atë dhe ata që ishin bashkë me të, për gjahun e peshqve që zunë; gjithashtu edhe Jakovin e Joanin, të bijtë e Zevedheut, të cilët ishin shokë të Simonit. Edhe Jisui i tha Simonit: Mos ki frikë, se që nga tani do të zësh njerëz. Edhe si sollën lundrat në tokë, i lanë të gjitha dhe shkuan pas tij.

От Луки 5:1-11

Однажды, когда народ теснился к Нему, чтобы слышать слово Божие, а Он стоял у озера Геннисаретского, увидел Он две лодки, стоящие на озере; а рыболовы, выйдя из них, вымывали сети. Войдя в одну лодку, которая была Симонова, Он просил его отплыть несколько от берега и, сев, учил народ из лодки. Когда же перестал учить, сказал Симону: отплыви на глубину и закиньте сети свои для лова. Симон сказал Ему в ответ: Наставник! мы трудились всю ночь и ничего не поймали, но по слову Твоему закину сеть. Сделав это, они поймали великое множество рыбы, и даже сеть у них прорывалась. И дали знак товарищам, находившимся на другой лодке, чтобы пришли помочь им; и пришли, и наполнили обе лодки, так что они начинали тонуть. Увидев это, Симон Петр припал к коленям Иисуса и сказал: выйди от меня, Господи! потому что я человек грешный. Ибо ужас объял его и всех, бывших с ним, от этого лова рыб, ими пойманных; также и Иакова и Иоанна, сыновей Зеведеевых, бывших товарищами Симону. И сказал Симону Иисус: не бойся; отныне будешь ловить человеков. И, вытащив обе лодки на берег, оставили всё и последовали за Ним.

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!

| 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 Alex, Newly Departed James, Newly Departed Alqiviadhi, Alexandra, Jeff Paul</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>September 24-30 Sharon Marshal (N) Bob Krimetz (B) Letitia & Mike Desloges (A)</p> <p><u>Seven-Day Vigil Candles</u></p> <p>Llukan Dylgjeri – health Michael Mogilevich - health Niko & Kristin Chochelli – Travel</p> | <p><u>Church Lectionary</u></p> <p><i>Today</i> Romans 8:28-39 Luke 21:12-19 2 Corinthians 6:1-10 Luke 5:1-11</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, Naomi, Terry, Naomi, Annette, Tatiana, Lester Jr., Natalia, Otari, Lasha, Fr. Nikolas, Llukan, Marina, Sophia, Fr. Maxwell, Belinda</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> Galatians 5:22-6:2 Luke 6:17-23 Ephesians 1:22-2:3 Luke 4:37-44</p> <p><i>Tuesday</i> 1 John 4:12-19 John 19:25-27; 21:24-25 Ephesians 2:19-3:7 Luke 5:12-16</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Prayers In General</i></p> | | |
| <p>The community of Ss. Peter & 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, Sandra, Enoch, John, Victoria, Melenie, Grace, Michael, Barbara, Giorgi, Molly, Jim, Chloe, Alma-Anastasia, Marianthi, Marsha, Ann,</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><i>[Petitions at Augmented Litany]</i> 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 style="text-align: center;">COFFEE HOUR</p> <p><u>September</u> 24 Tish Deslogese</p> <p><u>October</u> 01 – 08 – 15 – Tina Tsiadis 22 – Letitia Desloges 29 - Bacon</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>Wednesday</i> Ephesians 3:8-21 Luke 5:33-39</p> <p><i>Thursday</i> 2 Corinthians 4:6-15 Luke 6:17-23 Ephesians 4:14-19 Luke 6:12-19</p> <p><i>Friday</i> Ephesians 4:17-25 Luke 6:17-23</p> <p><i>Saturday</i> 1 Corinthians 14:20-25 Luke 5:17-26</p> <p><u>Reading the Bible in a Year</u></p> <p>Sept 24: 2 Macc 1-4 Sept 25: 2 Macc 5-8 Sept 26: 2 Macc 9-12 Sept 27: 2 Macc 13-15 Sept 28: 1 Esdras 1-4 Sept 29: 1 Esdras 5-9 Sept 30: PrMan; PS 151</p> |

Simple Or Easy But not Both

September 19, 2023 · Fr. Barnabas Powell

“It is the sweet, simple things of life which are the real ones, after all.” So says the author of *Little House on the Prairie*, Laura Ingalls Wilder. But life is so very often not simple. It’s complicated and difficult and filled with so many motivations all mixed together and hard to tease out the good from the bad.



I was having a recent discussion with my daughter and we were talking about some ethical issues. She made a forceful statement that she was adamant was true. I responded by saying “OK, how do you know it’s true? Give me your reasoning. What’s your foundation for that insistence?” She saw where I was going and then we had a very important talk about first principles.

So, how do we live in this complicated world with the truth that simple things are the best things? Well, first we have to be wise enough and humble enough to discern what those simple things are. And you’re not going to do that by yourself. You’re going to need the humility to learn wisdom from those who came before you, and then you’re going to have to do the disciplines of that wisdom to be able to tell the simple from the deceptively complicated. If you do this, you’ll be free from the delusions that complicate your life.

Look at our lesson today in Galatians 5:11-21:

BRETHREN, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? In that case the stumbling block of the cross has been removed. I wish those who unsettle you would mutilate themselves! For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” But if you bite and devour one another take heed that you are not consumed by one another. But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would. But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

St. Paul continues to correct these Galatians by warning them not to complicate the Truth!

And then he tells them about the “whole law,” and by that he means the whole Jewish Law that the Jews had had since Moses gave them the 10 Commandments and all the laws they had developed around the Torah to make sure the people kept the Law, that whole law can be summed up in one, simple phrase: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” If we kept this simple (but not easy) command, we would fulfill every part of God’s wisdom for us, humans. Of course, now we have to struggle with the fullest definitions of two words: “love” and “neighbor.”

“Love” is simple, but not easy. Because the love St. Paul means is God’s love; not the notion of love we all too often see displayed in our world. This Love is a love that isn’t diminished by anything or any action. This love doesn’t depend on being loved in return or getting something from the object of our love. This love is a love that loves regardless of the reactions of the one loved. This love is a choice and never expects anything in return. Yeah, that’s the love St. Paul means.

“Neighbor” isn’t just reduced to the person or family that lives next door to me, but everyone who shares my common human nature. All of humanity is my neighbor, whether they like me or not; whether I like them or not. My “neighbor” is that one right in front of me at any given moment, and that neighbor is to be the object of my love BECAUSE that’s exactly how God has loved me.

In 278 A.D. during the very short reign of Roman Emperor Probus, three great heroes of the Church left their witness for us to see! Saints Trophimos and Sabbatios traveled to the fabled city of Antioch and witnessed the pagan celebration of the feast of Apollo at Daphne. They were so struck by the spiritual blindness that this festival displayed that they went to Atticus, the governor of the area, and presented themselves as Christians in hopes of persuading the governor of the Faith. Both were arrested and tortured. St. Sabbatios died from the torture, but Trophimos survived the torture and was imprisoned after being forced to walk to his prison in lead boots with spikes in them. Dorymedon was a pagan counselor of the area and he went to the prison to minister to Trophimos. While he tended to the saint, a great pagan feast was happening and Dorymedon was asked why he didn’t offer sacrifices to the gods during the feast. Dorymedon admitted that he had become a Christian under the influence of Trophimos. So, Dorymedon suffered torture and eventually, they beheaded both men for their Faith in Christ. These men embraced the simple message of new life in Jesus and faced the not-easy consequences of this simple faith!

Today, do you want your life to be less complicated? Don’t we all long for “the simple things?” If that’s what you desire, then the path to that place is through developing this sacrificial love that makes you like Jesus Christ, the only true Lover of Mankind and the Author of the Normal Orthodox Life.

Prayer for the Week

As a mighty river full of the divine gifts of the Holy Spirit’s grace, O valiant athletes of the Lord, you richly water all of the world with the beneficent floods of your miracles. Pray to God for us!

<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/faithencouraged/2023/09/simple-or-easy-but-not-both/>

Local Volunteers in Greater Philadelphia Plan 12th Annual Benefit for International Orthodox Christian Charities

Philly Tradition of Banquet and Silent Auction Supports Humanitarian Programs in Ethiopia, Turkey, Ukraine, US, Elsewhere

In what has become an annual tradition spanning more than a decade, Philadelphia-area volunteers are hosting their 12th Annual Banquet to Benefit IOCC at **Adelphia Restaurant in Deptford, New Jersey, on October 29, 2023**, supporting the worldwide humanitarian and development work of International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC). The Greater Philadelphia Committee is pleased to announce that this year’s guest of honor is His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, head of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. His Eminence will address the audience with a special message during the evening’s events. The keynote speaker will be IOCC Executive Director and CEO Constantine M. Triantafilou, who will present the latest updates on IOCC’s worldwide programs.

This gala event is organized by more than 30 local volunteers who make up the Greater Philadelphia Committee of IOCC. The group represents various Orthodox Christian jurisdictions and reflects the wide support IOCC’s humanitarian mission enjoys across the area. Chaired by Mr. Tony Pantazopoulos, the committee has organized numerous successful pan-Orthodox annual benefits supporting IOCC’s emergency relief and development programs both in the US and around the world.

Tickets and sponsorships for this year’s banquet are available at: [iocc.org/philadelphia](https://www.iocc.org/philadelphia).

Nationwide, individual volunteers and groups like the Philadelphia-area committee raise over \$700,000 annually in support of IOCC’s global work.

International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) is the humanitarian relief and development agency of the Assembly of Canonical Bishops of the United States of America. Since its inception in 1992, IOCC has provided more than \$800 million in humanitarian relief and sustainable development programs in over 60 countries worldwide. Today, IOCC applies its expertise in humanitarian response to natural and manmade crises in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and the United States, offering assistance based solely on need

September/October Events

September

24 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy (Education Sunday)

27 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets

October

01 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

04 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets

06 – 6:00pm Fun Night

08 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

11 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets

15 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

18 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets

22 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

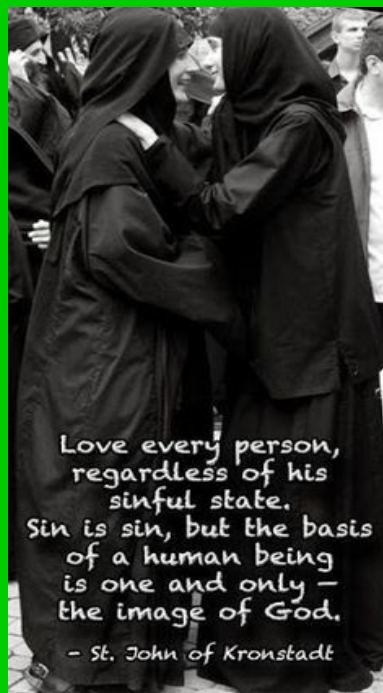
25 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets

29 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

Can't join us in person?

We stream our services on our YouTube Channel:

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



Joy is the Infallible Sign of God's Presence

Although we have no written evidence that Our Lord Jesus Christ laughed, I am personally convinced that he did. How could He not have shared in our humanity with perfection had he not had a sense of humor, and shared moments of laughter with His disciples? Laughter is such a precious gift, for it allows us to share circumstances in our lives in a special way. When we allow ourselves to see with joy those often funny events that take place around us, we are able to put ourselves in a proper perspective. Our ability to laugh at ourselves helps reduce our sense of self-importance. That a Christian can laugh in no way suggests it is proper to smile at dirty humor, or make light of another person's infirmity or failure. Our humor must never be based on ridicule, or the demeaning of another. Christ used humor when He depicted a camel struggling to get through the eye of a needle. (Matt. 19:24). And we read in Proverbs 17:22, "that a merry heart does good, like medicine".

A sense of humor demonstrates to others that we live with joy and gladness in our hearts, because we have reason to be happy. We believe the gift of salvation is a good reason to be happy, since the Lord's ministry did not end on the Cross, but was followed by His Holy Resurrection. Living with a joyful heart adds value to our faith because it makes others want to share in the joy they see in us.

We can laugh because we know that all will work out in the end because God loves us, and we believe His providential hand is at work in our lives. We believe that God knows there is plenty of sadness, sorrow, and sickness in this life, but that it will not prevail, because His plan for our salvation is at work. The old Celtic saying, "Life is all about loving, living, and laughing, not about hating, dying, and moaning," has as its basis the Orthodox Christianity of the Celtic people. That is why it is an oxymoron for a Christian to be crabby, griping, and whining, and why "Joy is the infallible sign of God's presence".

With love in Christ,
Abbot Tryphon