

# Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

Albanian Archdiocese - OCA

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

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29**

**21st Sunday after Pentecost**

**Martyr Anastasia the Roman, Ven. Abramius the Recluse**

**Tone 4  
Troparion  
(Resurrection)**

*When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the apostles: "Death is overthrown! Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy!"*

**Tone 4  
Troparion  
(St. Anastasia)**

*Thy lamb Anastasia calls out to Thee, O Jesus, in a loud voice: "I love Thee, my Bridegroom, and in seeking Thee I endure suffering. In baptism I was crucified so that I might reign in Thee, and I died so that I might live with Thee. Accept me as a pure sacrifice, for I have offered myself in love." Through her prayers save our souls, since Thou art merciful!*

**Tone 8  
Troparion  
(Ven. Abramius)**

*The image of God was truly preserved in thee, O Father, for thou didst take up the Cross and follow Christ. By so doing, thou taughtest us to disregard the flesh for it passes away; but to care instead for the soul, for it is immortal. Therefore thy spirit, venerable Abramius, rejoices with the angels.*

**Tone 4  
Kontakion  
(Resurrection)**

*My Savior and Redeemer as God rose from the tomb and delivered the earth-born from their chains. He has shattered the gates of hell, and as Master, He has risen on the third day!*

**Tone 8  
Kontakion  
(St. Anastasia)**

*Purified by the waters of virginity, righteous Anastasia, thou wast crowned by the blood of martyrdom. Thou dost grant healing and salvation to those in need, and who call on thee from their hearts, for Christ gives thee strength, pouring out on thee ever-flowing grace.*

**Tone 3  
Kontakion  
(Ven. Abramius)**

*Thou didst live in the flesh on earth as an angel, and through thine ascetic life thou didst become like a tree nourished by the waters of abstinence and didst flourish. Thou hast washed away stains with the streams of thy tears and so thou hast been revealed, O Abramius, to be a God-like vessel of the Spirit.*

**Prokeimenon**

**Tone 4 (Resurrection)**

O Lord, how manifold are Thy works; / in wisdom hast Thou made them all. (Ps. 103:26)  
V. Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord, my God, Thou art very great! (Ps. 103:1)

## ✠ The Epistle Reading ✠

### **Galatians 2:16-20**

knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

### **Galatianeve 2:16-20**

duke ditur se nuk drejtësohet njeriu prej veprash ligji, veçse me anë të besimit të Jisu Krishtit, edhe ne i besuam Krishtit Jisu, që të drejtësohemi prej besimit të Krishtit, dhe jo prej veprave të ligjit; sepse asnjë mish nuk do të drejtësohet prej veprave të ligjit. Po në qoftë se duke kërkuar të drejtësohemi në Krishtin, u gjetëm edhe ne mëkatarë, atëherë Krishti qenka shërbëtor i mëkatit? Larg qoftë! Sepse nëse ndërtoj përsëri ato që prisha, bëj veten time shkelës. Sepse unë me anë të ligjit vdiqa në ligj, që të rroj në Perëndinë. Bashkë me Krishtin u kryqëzova; edhe s'rroj më unë, po Krishti rron tek unë; edhe ajo që rroj unë tani në mish, rroj në besimin e Birit të Perëndisë, i cili më deshi edhe dha veten e tij për mua.

### **К Галатам 2:16-20**

однако же, узнав, что человек оправдывается не делами закона, а только верою в Иисуса Христа, и мы уверовали во Христа Иисуса, чтобы оправдаться верою во Христа, а не делами закона; ибо делами закона не оправдается никакая плоть. Если же, ища оправдания во Христе, мы и сами оказались грешниками, то неужели Христос есть слугитель греха? Никак. Ибо если я снова созидаю, что разрушил, то сам себя делаю преступником. Законом я умер для закона, чтобы жить для Бога. Я сораспялся Христу, и уже не я живу, но живет во мне Христос. А что ныне живу во плоти, то живу верою в Сына Божия, возлюбившего меня и предавшего Себя за меня.

### **Tone 4**

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. Go forth, prosper and reign, for the sake of meekness, righteousness and truth! *(Ps. 44:3b)*

V. For Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity. *(Ps. 44:6)*

***A man in this world must solve a problem: to be with Christ, or to be against Him. And every man decides this, whether he wants to or not. He will either be a lover of Christ or a fighter of Christ. There is no third option.***

## ✠ The Gospel Reading ✠

### **Luke 8:26-39**

Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!" For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness. Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered him. And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss. Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them. Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned. When those who fed them saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. They also who had seen it told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed. Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned. Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you." And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

### **Llukait 8:26-39**

Edhe me lundrën arritën në vendin e gadarinëve, që është përtej Galilesë. Edhe kur doli në tokë, i doli përpara një njeri prej qytetit, që kishte demonë prej shumë vitesh, edhe rrobë nuk vishte, edhe në shtëpi nuk rrinte, po nëpër varre. Edhe kur pa Jisuin, bërtiti e i ra ndër këmbë, e me zë të madh tha: Ç'ke me mua, Jisu, bir i Perëndisë së Lartë? Të lutem, mos më mundo. Sepse ai urdhëroi frymën e ndyrë të dalë nga njeriu; sepse prej shumë vitesh e kishte rrëmbyer, edhe lidhej me vargonj, edhe ruhej me hekura këmbësh; po ai i këpuste prangat, edhe sillej prej demonit nëpër shkretëtira. Edhe Jisui e pyeti, duke thënë: Si e ke emrin? Edhe ai i tha: Legjion; sepse kishin hyrë tek ai shumë demonë. Edhe i luteshin të mos i urdhëronte të shkonin në humnerën e pafund. Edhe atje ishte një tufë e madhe derrash duke kullotur në mal; edhe i luteshin t'i linte të hyjnë tek ata; dhe ai i la. Edhe demonët, si dolën prej njeriut, hynë te derrat; dhe tufa e derrave u hodh prej shkëmbit në liqen dhe u mbyt. Edhe kullotësit, kur panë se ç'u bë, ikën dhe lajmëruan në qytet e nëpër ara. Edhe dolën të shihnin se ç'u bë; edhe erdhën te Jisui, edhe e gjetën njeriun, prej të cilit kishin dalë demonët, duke ndenjmur pranë këmbëve të Jisuit, të veshur e të urtësuar; dhe u frikësuan. U treguan dhe ata që e panë, si shpëtoi i demonizuari. Edhe gjithë turma e vendeve rreth Gadarinëve iu lutën të ikë nga ata, sepse i kishte zënë frikë e madhe; edhe ai hyri në lundër, e u kthye. Edhe njeriu, prej të cilit kishin dalë demonët, i lutej të jetë bashkë me të; po Jisui e lëshoi, duke thënë: Kthehu në shtëpinë tënde, dhe rrëfe sa të bëri Perëndia. Edhe ai shkoi duke shpallur nëpër gjithë qytetin sa i bëri Jisui.

### **От Луки 8:26-39**

И приплыли в страну Гадаринскую, лежащую против Галилеи. Когда же вышел Он на берег, встретил Его один человек из города, одержимый бесами с давнего времени, и в одежду не одевавшийся, и живший не в доме, а в гробах. Он, увидев Иисуса, вскричал, пал пред Ним и громким голосом сказал: что Тебе до меня, Иисус, Сын Бога Всевышнего? умоляю Тебя, не мучь меня. Ибо [Иисус] повелел нечистому духу выйти из сего человека, потому что он долгое время мучил его, так что его связывали цепями и узами, сберегая его; но он разрывал узы и был гоним бесом в пустыни. Иисус спросил его: как тебе имя? Он сказал: легион, --потому что много бесов вошло в него. И они просили Иисуса, чтобы не повелел им идти в бездну. Тут же на горе паслось большое стадо свиней; и [бесы] просили Его, чтобы позволил им войти в них. Он позволил им. Бесы, выйдя из человека, вошли в свиней, и бросилось стадо с крутизны в озеро и потонуло. Пастухи, видя происшедшее, побежали и рассказали в городе и в селениях. И вышли видеть происшедшее; и, придя к Иисусу, нашли человека, из которого вышли бесы, сидящего у ног Иисуса, одетого и в здравом уме; и ужаснулись. Видевшие же рассказали им, как исцелился бесноватый. И просил Его весь народ Гадаринской окрестности удалиться от них, потому что они объята были великим страхом. Он вошел в лодку и возвратился. Человек же, из которого вышли бесы, просил Его, чтобы быть с Ним. Но Иисус отпустил его, сказав: возвратись в дом твой и расскажи, что сотворил тебе Бог. Он пошел и проповедывал по всему городу, что сотворил ему Иисус.

## Communion Hymn

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

### Monastic Martyr Anastasia of Rome

The Monastic Martyr Anastasia the Roman lost her parents when she was three years old, and was taken to be raised by the Igoumeness of a women's monastery, whose name was Sophia, a nun who had attained a high degree of spiritual perfection. She raised Anastasia in fervent faith, in the fear of God, and obedience. After seventeen years, Anastasia became known as a great ascetic, and she was very beautiful.

The Emperor Decius (249-251) began his persecution of Christians at that time. The city administrator, Probus, following the Emperor's orders, commanded that Anastasia be brought to him. Blessed by her Igoumeness to suffer for Christ, the young martyr Anastasia went out to meet the armed soldiers. Seeing her youth and beauty, Probus first tried flattery to make her deny Christ.

"Why do you waste your youth deprived of pleasure?" he asked. "What is to be gained by enduring tortures and death for the Crucified? Worship our gods, marry a handsome husband, and live with glory and honor."

While Saint Anastasia stood before the ruler, her mind stood before Christ, and with her spiritual eyes, she beheld the comeliness of her Bridegroom.

The Saint replied, "My spouse, my riches, my life and my happiness are my Lord Jesus Christ, and you cannot turn me away from Him by your deceit!"

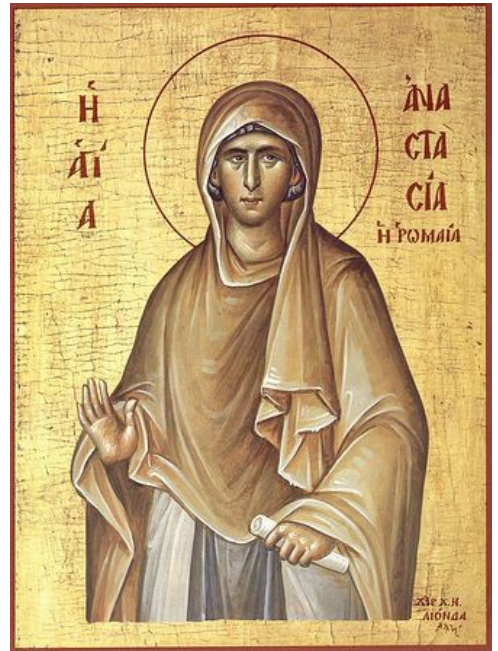
Probus had her stripped of her clothing, in order to humiliate her. She told him, "You can have me whipped, beaten, and cut to pieces, and then my nakedness will be hidden by my wounds, and my blood will cover my shame."

Probus subjected Anastasia to horrible tortures. The holy martyr bravely endured all of them, glorifying and praising God. When she became thirsty she asked for some water, and a Christian named Cyril gave her a drink. She thanked him, but Probus had him beheaded.

Then her tormentors cut off her breasts and ripped out her tongue, while an Angel held her upright. When the people witnessed the inhuman and disgusting treatment the Saint received, they became indignant, and Probus was forced to end the tortures by having her beheaded. In this manner, Saint Anastasia received the unfading crown of martyrdom.

Saint Anastasia's body was thrown outside the city limits to be eaten by wild animals, but the Lord did not permit her holy relics to be dishonored. By the instructions of a holy Angel, Igoumeness Sophia found Saint Anastasia's mutilated body. With the help of two Christians, she buried it in the earth.

Her right tibia with the skin is at Grigoriou Monastery on Mount Athos, and pieces of her relics are at the Saint Alexander Nevsky Lavra in St. Petersburg.





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 Protopresbyter Arthur, Newly Departed Nicholas, Helen, Sophie, Fran, Layla, Robert, Tamara</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 conflicts in Ukraine, Armenia, and the Middle East: 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>October 29 – November 4 Valantine Nesrova (B) Valantine &amp; Lucy (A)</p> <p><b><u>Seven-Day Vigil Candles</u></b></p> <p>Llukan Dylgjeri – health Michael Mogilevich - health</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><b><u>Church Lectionary</u></b></p> <p><i>Today</i> Galatians 2:16-20 Luke 8:26-39</p> <p><i>Monday</i> Colossians 2:13-20 Luke 11:29-33</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, Terry, Naomi, Annette, Tatiana, Lester Jr., Natalia, Otari, Lasha, Fr. Nikolas, Llukan, Marina, Sophia, Fr. Maxwell, Donna</p>		<p><i>Tuesday</i> Colossians 2:20-3:3 Luke 11:34-41</p> <p><i>Wednesday</i> Colossians 3:17-4:1 Luke 11:42-46</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, Sandra, Enoch, John, Victoria, Melenie, Grace, Michael, Barbara, Giorgi, Molly, Jim, Chloe, Alma-Anastasia, Marianthi, Marsha, Ann, Newly-Illumined Maximos</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 conflicts in Ukraine, Armenia, and the Middle East.</p> <p><i>[Petitions at Augmented Litany]</i> Again we pray for a cessation of the hostilities in Ukraine, Armenia, and the Middle East, and that reconciliation and peace will flourish in these places, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>COFFEE HOUR</b></p> <p><b><u>October</u></b> 29 – Bacon</p> <p><b><u>November</u></b> 05 – Tish Desloges 12 19 26 – Tina Marlos Tsiadis</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> Colossians 4:10-18 Luke 12:2-12</p> <p><i>Saturday</i> 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 Luke 9:1-6</p> <p><b><u>Reading the Bible in a Year</u></b></p> <p>Oct 29: Luke 13-15 Oct 30: Luke 16-18 Oct 31: Luke 19-21 Nov 01: Luke 22-24 Nov 02: John 1-3 Nov 03: John 4-6 Nov 04: John 7-9</p>

## The Story of a Transformed Life

BY FR. BARNABAS POWELL



### The Story of a Transformed Life

Bestselling author Bryant McGill once said “Real transformation requires real honesty. If you want to move forward – get real with yourself.” This is such a powerful insight. But it isn’t particularly novel. The truth is this is a foundational truth of ancient philosophy. Aristotle said, “Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.”

Our Orthodox Christian Treasure preserves wisdom like this: “You have a job to do, soul, and a great one: examine yourself.” St. Gregory the Theologian (Poem 2.1.78 “To His Own Soul”).

So, if this is a common understanding of the key to knowing yourself, why is this such a “new” discovery for many of us? Because the current society is desperate to distract us from this honest self-knowledge. Because if you can get us to not know ourselves you can exert control over the population. If a person is a stranger to himself, he is a slave to outside control and propaganda.

In fact, I’ll go further to say that if you ever hope to take seriously the invitation of Jesus Christ to become “like”

Him through the wisdom of the Church, you are going to have to take the risk of an honest self-examination. This insight leads a person to a stronger ability to actually tame their passions and benefit most from the spiritual discipline of repentance and confession. You will be transformed.

Look at our lesson today in Galatians 1:11-19:

*Brethren, I would have you know that the gospel which was preached by me is not man’s gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord’s brother.*

St. Paul is trying to correct these Galatians. You see, someone has come to them and began to teach them that the Gentiles had to become Jews before they could become Christians. Paul hears about this and hits the roof!

So Paul tells these Galatians his story. And it’s a story of an amazing transformation in Paul’s life.

First, Paul tells the Galatians that his message isn’t “man’s Gospel.” Paul wants these Galatians to know that he didn’t get his message from any earthly source. His preaching is the result of revelation from Jesus Christ Himself. He goes on to say that he did not “confer with flesh and blood.” Apparently, Paul had a powerful encounter with Jesus Christ while he was in Arabia grappling with the implications of his vision on the road to Damascus! (see Acts 9)

Next, Paul tells these Galatians that nothing less than this powerful encounter was enough to change him from the “Saul” who persecuted the Christians and even gave his blessing for the killing of the first martyr of the Christian Faith, St. Stephen, the deacon. (see Acts 6) Paul’s major transformation came not from clever arguments or convincing preaching, but from the Lord Jesus Himself. So, these Galatians are not just rejecting Paul’s message, they are in danger of rejecting Christ!

Finally, Paul insists that these Galatians must take seriously this message, this Gospel, of authentic liberation and

wisdom SO THAT they will have the courage and the spiritual formation to stand for truth and for Faith in a society that so easily changes truths to fit their own desires. Abandoning the Faith that Paul taught them is an actual rejection of Jesus Himself. Big stuff!

By the way, there is an exception to the logical fallacy of an appeal to authority: Appealing to authority is valid when the authority is actually legitimate!

St. James, the first bishop of the Church in Jerusalem is another example of a transformed life. He was a blood relative of the Lord Jesus, either a son of St. Joseph by his wife who died before he became the protector of the young Virgin Mary, or the nephew of St. Joseph, as the son of his brother Cleops. Regardless, this close family connection with Jesus had him called St. James the Brother of the Lord. His other nickname was "Obliah" which means "The Just One." This man was known to be very skeptical of the ministry of Jesus while the Lord was alive and he had the reputation among the Jews of being a just and honorable man in society. Being a relative of the Crucified Lord and knowing his reputation for being honest and just, the leaders of the Jews sought to have him address the people to stop the sudden growth of converts to Christ after His resurrection.

St. James was compelled to stand at the highest spot on the Temple Mount and speak to the people on the Feast of the Passover. St. James declared loudly and boldly that Jesus was the promised Messiah and sat at the right hand of the Father in heaven and He would come again to "judge the living and the dead!" The crowd began to proclaim "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" in agreement with St. James. But the leaders and the wise men in the Temple said "So, even the just one has been led astray." The High Priest at the time, Ananias, commanded St. James to be thrown from the place, and that he should be stoned for proclaiming Jesus Lord. As this was happening St. James prayed for all his persecutors and asked God not to hold them guilty for his murder. Finally, the saint was killed by the blow from a club wielded by a certain Jewish scribe. St. James allowed the Holy Spirit to so transform him that he embraced Christ and served His Church no matter what the cost.

Today, we Orthodox insist that we stand on the firm foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, with Jesus as our chief authority. We are given in the wisdom of the Faith all the tools and insights to go on this journey of self-knowledge that will transform our lives to make us like Jesus Christ. Everything we need is here in the Church and all that is left is the courage and the humility to be transformed by grace so that we will be able to Live a Normal Orthodox Life!

### Prayer for the Week

**As the Lord's disciple, O righteous One, you received the Gospel, as Martyr, you have unwavering courage, as the Lord's brother, you have forthrightness, as Hierarch, intercession. Intercede with Christ our God, that our souls may be saved.**

<https://faithencouraged.org/the-story-of-a-transformed-life/>

***Please join us for our 3rd Annual ETHNIC CELEBRATION on Saturday, November 4th, beginning at 3:00pm.***

Our last two festivals were a wonderful success. We are looking forward to another beautiful, blessed event!

**Tickets on sale now** for an all-you-can-eat dinner at \$25 per adult or \$60 for a family with children. **All tickets will be sold in advance. Parties of 8 will have a reserved table for their party.**

Please email or call Donna Bacon at [dabo893@verizon.net](mailto:dabo893@verizon.net) or 267-250-0520:

- 1) to VOLUNTEER to bring a dish (or dishes)
- 2) to RESERVE your tickets now!

Please join us, and share our faith by bringing your family and friends!  
Thank you for your continued participation and support.

## September/October Events

### October

29 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy  
*IOCC Banquet*

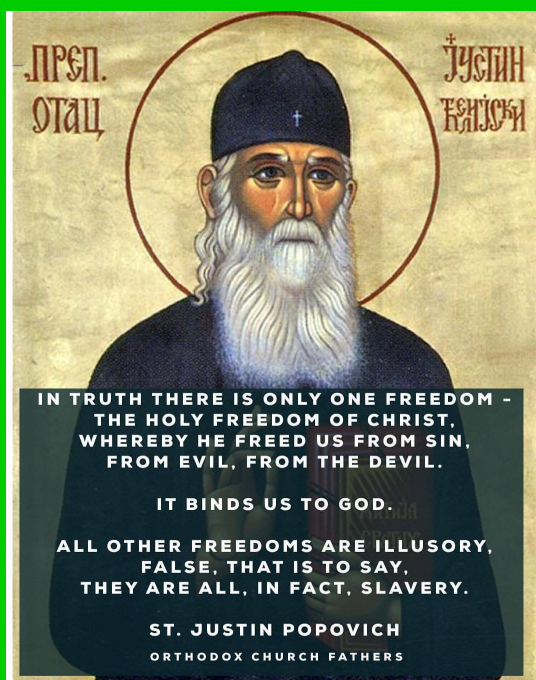
### November

04 – 3:00pm **Ethnic Food Festival!**  
05 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy  
*Education Sunday*  
08 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets  
12 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy  
15 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets  
17 – 6:00pm Fun Night  
19 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

### Can't join us in person?

We stream our services on our YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@sspeterpaulorthodoxhurchoi8io>



## Waging War Against the Flesh

Since the eyes and the ears are the doors of the soul, an Orthodox Christian must not leave the body without attention. Unlike the religion of Gnosticism, which teaches the separation of soul and body, with the physical world being evil and something to be overcome, historic Christianity teaches the unity the body and soul, with the physical world being transformed and made anew in Christ. This means that, while caring about one's soul, an Orthodox Christian must not leave the body without attention.

The body is given over to temptation, which is rooted in the mind. As Christians we know that we must never play with temptations, for in doing so we have already fallen half-way. Thus, an Orthodox Christian who takes his salvation seriously would never partake in seductive dances, or enter into flirtation as though it were a sport, for he would know this to be a dangerous game.

Temptations gain hold when we entertain dirty thoughts and ideas, sometimes by allowing our eyes and ears to entertain things that can overcome our will, causing us to fall. It is much easier to stop a temptation in the beginning, than to do battle with a seductive idea once it has gained entry. A person who wants to prevent a burglary makes every effort to prevent a burglar from gaining entrance in the first place. Like taking precautions that will prevent a burglary, we must never allow ourselves to entertain temptations, for that would be like inviting a criminal into your home with the intent of trying to talk him out of stealing from you.

Many are convinced that sexual needs are so insurmountable in strength, as to make it impossible to resist. This is only the case when we habitually give in to the passions, and avoid using the tools given to us by the Church to bring our body into submission. If we observe the periods of fasting, especially the Wednesday and Friday days of abstinence, eat moderate amounts of food, avoid the overuse of alcohol, and say no to drugs, we will have taken a big step forward in our struggle with lust. Remember, a healthy body contributes to the health of the soul.

Finally, it is good to take to heart the advice of Saint Ephraim of Syrian, "Think about the good so as not to think about the bad." Guard against spending time with people whose jokes and story-telling are occasions for sinful thoughts, and avoid bad company, for "Bad company corrupts good character (1 Corinthians 15:33)."

With love in Christ,  
Abbot Tryphon