

Sts. Peter and Paul Albanian Orthodox Church

First-enthroned of the apostles, teachers of the universe: Entreat the Master of all to grant peace to the world, and to our souls great mercy!

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December 12, 2021

25TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS

Today 10:00am Divine Liturgy
Wed. 15 7:15pm Bible Study
via GoogleMeet
Sat. 18 6:00pm Vespers
Sun. 19 10:00am Divine Liturgy
Bake Sale & Raffle

One must be baptized and chrismated an Orthodox Christian to receive Holy Communion. Guests are invited to receive a blessing at the chalice and partake of the post-Communion bread (Antidoron).

Fast Days: Monday to Saturday (fasting from meat, fish, eggs, dairy, wine and oil as you are able. Fish, wine and oil are allowed on Sunday and Saturday. Wine and oil is allowed on Tuesday and Thursday.)

Troparion – Tone 7 (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!*

Kontakion – Tone 8 (Forefathers)

*You did not worship the graven
image,
O thrice-blessed ones,
but armed with the immaterial
Essence of God,
you were glorified in a trial by fire.
From the midst of unbearable
flames you called on God, crying:
“Hasten, O compassionate One!
Speedily come to our aid,
for Thou art merciful and able to do
as Thou dost will!”*

Prayers for those in our Sts. Peter and Paul community (parishioners, family, friends) can be listed for remembrance in our litanies during the Liturgy. Feel free to give names to Fr. Nicholas - please indicate how each person listed is connected to us (parishioner, family, friend, etc.), as well as why we are praying for them (health, memory, travel, etc.).

Confessions can be heard by appointment. If you need, I will come to you during the week. Please do not hesitate to call for a time to drop by the church or to have me visit you.

Remembrances for both the living and the dead during the prayers of preparation of the Eucharistic Lamb and during the Augmented Litany should be given the week before the desired remembrance so that the names can be put into the bulletin and given to the Deacons for the prayers. Any names of the living that are not marked as sick or traveling will be listed under general prayers.

SCRIPTURE THIS WEEK

Church Lectionary

Today

Colossians 3:4-11
Luke 14:16-24

Monday

Galatians 5:22-6:2
Luke 6:17-23
1 Timothy 1:1-7
Mark 8:11-21

Tuesday

1 Timothy 1:8-14
Mark 8:22-26

Wednesday

1 Timothy 1:18-20, 2:8-15
Mark 8:30-34

Thursday

1 Timothy 3:1-13
Mark 9:10-16

Friday

1 Timothy 4:4-8, 16
Mark 9:33-41

Saturday

Galatians 3:8-12
Luke 13:18-29
Galatians 3:8-12
Luke 14:1-11

Reading the Bible in a Year

Dec 12: 2 Timothy
Dec 13: Titus
Dec 14: Philemon
Dec 15: Hebrews 1-3
Dec 16: Hebrews 4-6
Dec 17: Hebrews 7-9
Dec 18: Hebrews 10-13

DECEMBER EVENTS

December

12 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
15 – 7:15pm Bible Study via
GoogleMeet
18 – 6:00pm Vespers
19 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
22 – 7:15pm Bible Study via
GoogleMeet

24 – 7:00pm Compline & Matins
25 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy *for the
Nativity of Our Lord*
26 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
31 – 7:00pm Vespers Liturgy *for the
Circumcision of the
Lord*

Coffee Hour

This Week:

Next Week:

Flower Donation

***This week's flowers were
donated by:***



"...those who have attained adoption as sons of God through faith in Christ are baptized not into anything belonging to the created order but into the Holy Trinity Itself, through the mediation of the Word, who on the one hand joined what is human to Himself by means of the flesh that was united to Him, and on the other was joined by nature to Him who had begotten Him, since He was by nature God. Thus what is servile rises up to the level of sonship through participation in Him who is Son in reality, called and, as it were, promoted to the rank which the Son possesses by nature. That is why we are called offspring of God and are such, for we have experienced a rebirth by faith through the Spirit."

-St. Cyril of Alexandria



A Prayer for the Week

Dear Lord, in hustle and bustle of these holiday days, I find myself distracted from the true significance of the moment and the true purpose of Your first coming in Bethlehem. I'm tempted to worry about many things, most of which are out of my control in the first place! I know this is an attack of the evil one to get me off track as I prepare to celebrate Your Nativity AND prepare for Your Glorious Coming again. Give me the grace of a sober heart so that lawlessness doesn't overtake me! Amen

I am crucified with Christ

In our life, every undertaking, every action, every thought, must be a reflection Christ in our life. The Lord will grant us the strength and ability to accomplish good works and attain holiness, if we cooperate with His grace. Prayer alone is not enough if we do not reflect moral improvement. Change must take place in our heart if we are to win the battle against the ego, and this requires much work on our part.

Central to living in all holiness of life is the acquisition of a humble and contrite heart. Humility does not come without contrition, and both are obtained with much suffering and trial. Spiritual reading, together with prayer, are necessary components of this journey to God, but must be accompanied by spiritual direction, confession, and the acceptance of correction.

If we are so proud and puffed up that we swiftly take on the role of defense attorney when confronted with correction or the critique of another, we will simply fall further under the control of the ego, and humility will remain alien to our makeup. Often the critical observations of others, which we'd like to fend off, can become a tool for regeneration, for such corrections, even if offered by someone with ill intent, can be occasions for tremendous spiritual progress.

I am reminded of my late spiritual father, Archimandrite Dimitry of Santa Rosa. He was slandered by a local priest in a very public setting. When informed, the Elder Dimitry stood up from his desk, walked across the room, and began winding a wall clock. Asked why he seemingly cared little that he'd been so falsely and viciously slandered, his only response was to say, "Many sins have been forgiven because of this."

Making spiritual progress is never easy and must be accompanied by much effort on our part. It can come only through humility, which means that we can expect to be humiliated. If we do not flee from suffering and humiliation, but learn to accept it for our salvation, holiness can be ours, and our life will truly reflect the words of St. Paul, who said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me (Galatians 2:20)."

With love in Christ,
Abbot Tryphon

Colossians 3:4-11

When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Luke 14:16-24

Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.' And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.' For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper."

Children's Word

The highways and hedges

Do you like looking at maps? Do you sometimes wonder how far away things are on a map? When you read the Bible, have you ever thought about how far away from you is the place where Jesus spoke? Have you ever tried to find the Holy Land on a map?

In today's Gospel lesson, Jesus tells a parable about bringing people from far away into God's house. Most of us live far away from Palestine, where Jesus told this parable. Although we are far away from the Holy Land, Jesus said that people far away would come to God's house to a great banquet—a joyous party! God wants His house to be filled—not just with His family and friends, but with everybody!

In the Gospel today we read, "the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.'" We are the ones far away, in the highways and hedges. The servant in the parable is like an apostle, going to far away places to bring people to God. That's us! God said a long time ago and far away that many people from far away from the Holy Land will be invited to His house, to His great banquet! Let's always say yes to that invitation. And even more, let's help others come to this banquet too!

SAINT HERMAN OF ALASKA THE FIRST AMERICAN SAINT

Did you know that 221 years ago, when George Washington was still president, our first American saint lived in our very own country?

Saint Herman was born in Russia, and he became a monk there. In the 1700s, lots of Russians were living in Alaska so they could get animal furs and then sell them back in Russia. It was a big business! These Russians were Orthodox, so they wanted to have priests and churches there in their new land. The Russian government also wanted to teach the native people about Christ and to help them become Orthodox Christians too.

So Saint Herman left Russia, along with a few other men, to help the Russian fur traders and to try to help the native people on Kodiak Island. But they had lots of problems. Their main problem was the fur traders!—they were not nice to the native Alaskans, and they forced them to work for them, cheated them out of money, and were awful to the innocent people.

Saint Herman lived in Alaska for almost 40 years, and he had many problems there. But he always stuck up for the native people, teaching them about God, but even more, showing them Christ's love with his own life.

We celebrate St. Herman tomorrow, December 13th.

The “Mystery” of Lawlessness

December 8, 2021 · Fr. Barnabas Powell

The old Chinese curse says “May you live in interesting times.” Call me old-fashioned, but I think now qualifies as “interesting times.”

And when your life or my life is surrounded by chaos, confusion, disappointment, or unmet expectations, the temptation to panic or thrash about can certainly take over and my life becomes intoxicated with fear or anger or resentment or even hopelessness.

But we followers of Jesus Christ aren’t meant to have intoxicated lives. We were meant for the freedom of a sober heart SO THAT the present moment doesn’t crowd out the Light of eternal wisdom.

Look at our lesson today in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12:

BRETHREN, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our assembling to meet him, we beg you, brethren, not to be quickly shaken in mind or excited, either by spirit or by word, or by letter purporting to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you this? And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, and the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by his appearing and his coming. The coming of the lawless one by the activity of Satan will be with all power and with pretended signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are to perish, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends upon them a strong delusion, to make them believe what is false, so that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Of course, these Apocalyptic worries have been around forever, so that does make me stop a moment and wonder if I am overreacting! And the truth is I probably am overreacting. But it is this tendency of overreacting by we humans, no matter what our politics or our societal beliefs that is a symptom of what St. Paul calls “the mystery of lawlessness.”

It is both the abandoning of timeless wisdom AND the false notion that “we are going to destroy ourselves” that reveals the one common trait in all this mystery: We don’t love and trust God.

Look at what happens when we fall into this “mystery of lawlessness;” we abandon both timeless wisdom of morality AND the ability to trust that God is in control of History (His Story!). And notice that the Apostle calls this lawlessness by the same word we Orthodox call the Divine Mysteries. He does this precisely because we are dealing with the primary Sacrament of Satan. The Sacrament that defies explanation; is always beyond our ability to control or understand.

And that’s what is happening when humanity’s sanity slips into lawlessness by losing the ability to tell right from wrong. It happens when societies forget why timeless morals are best. It happens when a modern man claims that they have “discovered” new rights for this behavior or that behavior all in an attempt to normalize their own out-of-control passions! They have been captured by the “mystery of lawlessness.”

But, those who say they love and follow God are not immune to this “mystery” as well.

When the faithful panic and lose their sobriety and peace; when we fall for the delusion that this politician or that politician can rescue us from the confusion of the times, we display that we have also become victims of this “mystery of lawlessness.” We forget that none of the events of our day surprised God or have caught Him unaware. We forget that the moments we live are all invitations to embrace the sober and peaceful life of confident Faith in the God Who made the world. We become “lawless” ourselves in our panic and our lack of faith!

Today, there is no use browbeating your political opponents, thinking that your rhetoric or your powers of persuasion are enough to turn them from their chosen “mystery!” We who claim to love God must abandon the “mystery of lawlessness” for the sure and sober life of being Orthodox on Purpose!

К Колоссянам 3:4-11

Когда же явится Христос, жизнь ваша, тогда и вы явитесь с Ним во славе. Итак, умертвите земные члены ваши: блуд, нечистоту, страсть, злую похоть и любостяжание, которое есть идолослужение, за которые гнев Божий грядет на сынов противления, в которых и вы некогда обращались, когда жили между ними. А теперь вы отложите все: гнев, ярость, злобу, злоречие, сквернословие уст ваших; не говорите лжи друг другу, совлекшись ветхого человека с делами его и облекшись в нового, который обновляется в познании по образу Создавшего его, где нет ни Еллина, ни Иудея, ни обрезания, ни необрезания, варвара, Скифа, раба, свободного, но все и во всем Христос.

От Луки 14:16-24

Он же сказал ему: один человек сделал большой ужин и звал многих, и когда наступило время ужина, послал раба своего сказать званым: идите, ибо уже всё готово. И начали все, как бы сговорившись, извиняться. Первый сказал ему: я купил землю и мне нужно пойти посмотреть ее; прошу тебя, извини меня. Другой сказал: я купил пять пар волов и иду испытать их; прошу тебя, извини меня. Третий сказал: я женился и потому не могу придти. И, возвратившись, раб тот донес о сем господину своему. Тогда, разгневавшись, хозяин дома сказал рабу своему: пойдя скорее по улицам и переулкам города и приведи сюда нищих, увечных, хромых и слепых. И сказал раб: господин! исполнено, как приказал ты, и еще есть место. Господин сказал рабу: пойдя по дорогам и изгородям и убеди придти, чтобы наполнился дом мой. Ибо сказываю вам, что никто из тех званых не вкусит моего ужина, ибо много званых, но мало избранных.

Kolosianeve 3:4-11

Kur të shfaqet Krishti, jeta jonë, atëherë edhe ju bashkë me të do të shfaqeni në lavdi. Bëni pra të vdesin gjymtyrët tuaja që janë mbi dhe, kurvërinë, papastërtinë, dëshirimin, dëshirën e keqe dhe lakmimin, që është idhujtari, për të cilat vjen zemërata e Perëndisë përmbi bijtë e pabindjes. Në këto edhe ju ecët dikur, kur rronit në to. Po tani hidhini tej edhe ju të gjitha këto, zemëratën, mërinë, ligësinë, blasfeminë, fjalët e ndyra prej gojës suaj. Mos gënjeni njëri-tjetrit, pasi zhveshët njeriun e vjetër bashkë me punët e tij, edhe veshët të riun që përtërihet në njohje sipas shembëllesës së atij që e ka krijuar; ku s'ka Grek e Jude, rrethprerje e parrethprerje, barbar, Skit, shërbëtor, të lirë, por të gjitha e mbi të gjitha është Krishti.

Llukait 14:16-24

Edhe ai i tha atij: Një njeri bëri një darkë të madhe dhe ftoi shumë. Edhe në kohën e darkës dërgoi shërbëtorin e tij që t'u thoshte të ftuarve. Ejani, se tani të gjitha janë gati. Edhe të gjithë si të ishin në një mendje nisën të hiqeshin mënjanë. I pari i tha: Bleva një arë dhe kam nevojë të dal e ta shoh; të lutem të më ndjesh. Edhe një tjetër tha: Bleva pesë pendë qe dhe po shkoj t'i provoj; të lutem, të më ndjesh. Edhe një tjetër tha: Mora grua dhe prandaj nuk mund të vij. Edhe ai shërbëtori erdhi dhe ia tregoi të zotit këto. Atëherë i zoti i shtëpisë u zemërua, e i tha shërbëtorit të tij: Dil shpejt nëpër rrugët e nëpër udhët e qytetit, edhe fut këtu brenda të varfërit e të gjymtuarit, edhe të çalët e të verbërit. Edhe shërbëtori tha: Zot, u bë siç urdhërove, po ende ka vend. Edhe i zoti i tha shërbëtorit: Dil nëpër udhët e nëpër gardhet dhe shtrëngoi të hyjnë, që të mbushet shtëpia ime. Sepse po ju them juve, se asnjë nga ata njerëzit që qenë ftuar nuk do të shijojë darkën time.