

# 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!

Rev. Nicholas Dellermann (Rector) (860) 861-7468 - Very Rev. Dennis Rhodes

[fnicholas490@aol.com](mailto:fnicholas490@aol.com) - <http://sspeterpaulphila.org/>

January 2, 2022

## SUNDAY BEFORE THE THEOPHANY: FOREFEAST OF THE THEOPHANY

### REPOSE OF VEN. SERAPHIM, WONDERWORKER OF SAROV

Today .....	10:00am	Divine Liturgy
Wed. 05 .....	7:00pm	Vesperal Liturgy & Blessing of the Waters <i>Feast of Theophany</i>
Fri. 07 .....	6:00pm	Fun Night
Sat. 08 .....	6:00pm	Vespers
Sun. 09 .....	10:00am	Divine Liturgy

**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:** No fast this week!

### Troparion – Tone 4 (Resurrection)

*Let the heavens rejoice!  
Let the earth be glad!  
For the Lord has shown strength  
with His arm.  
He has trampled down death by  
death.  
He has become the first born of the  
dead.  
He has delivered us from the depths  
of hell,  
and has granted to the world  
great mercy.*

### Kontakion – Tone (St. Seraphim)

*Forsaking the beauty as well as the  
corruption of this world,  
thou didst settle in the monastery of  
Saróv, O Saint.  
There thou didst live an angelic life,  
becoming for many the way to  
salvation.  
Therefore, Christ has glorified thee,  
O Father Seraphim,  
enriching thee with abundant  
healing and miracles.  
So we cry to thee: Save us by thy  
prayers, venerable Seraphim, our  
father!*

## SCRIPTURE THIS WEEK

### Church Lectionary

#### Today

Galatians 5:22-6:2  
Luke 6:17-23  
2 Timothy 4:5-8  
Mark 1:1-8

#### Monday

Hebrews 3:5-11, 17-19  
Luke 19:37-44

#### Tuesday

Hebrews 4:1-13  
Luke 19:45-48

#### Wednesday

1 Corinthians 9:19-27  
Luke 3:1-18

#### Thursday

Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7  
Matthew 3:13-17

#### Friday

Hebrews 7:18-25  
Luke 20:19-26  
Acts 19:1-8  
John 1:29-34

#### Saturday

Ephesians 2:11-13  
Luke 12:32-40

### Reading the Bible in a Year

Jan 02: Genesis 5-8  
Jan 03: Genesis 9-12  
Jan 04: Genesis 13-16  
Jan 05: Genesis 17-20  
Jan 06: Genesis 21-24  
Jan 07: Genesis 25-28  
Jan 08: Genesis 29-32

**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.

## JANUARY EVENTS

### January

01 – NO VESPERS  
02 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy  
05 – 7:00pm Vespertal Liturgy &  
Blessing of the Waters  
*Feast of Theophany*  
07 – 6:00pm Fun Night  
08 – 6:00pm Vespers

09 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy  
12 – 7:15pm Bible Study  
15 – 6:00pm Vespers  
16 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy  
19 – 7:15pm Bible Study  
22 – 6:00pm Vespers  
23 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy  
26 – 7:15pm Bible Study

### **A Grateful Heart is Fertile Ground**

When you strive to interact with members of your family, with friends, coworkers, and all others, with respect, humility, and dignity, you lay the groundwork for the abundance of Grace needed to quicken your heart for the things of God. The soil is prepared for the planting of seeds that allow you to respond to God's grace, for a grateful heart is fertile ground for the things of God.

When you open your heart to others, with gratitude, the path is prepared for a relationship with Jesus Christ, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit will fill you with the power to live a life that is transformed by God's Grace. You will be filled with heartfelt gratitude for all God's gifts, and inner peace will be yours.

The preparation for sowing the seeds of the love of God, begin with responsive gratefulness. The Apostle Paul writes, "Remember, it is not you that holds up the root, but the root that holds you up (Rom. 11:18)." Any relationship with God, must begin with a grateful heart, and is cultivated by kindness, and goodwill towards others. When you are grateful you respond toward God and others by enacting other virtues.

The constant and cultivated feeling of deep appreciation and heartfelt gratitude for others, quickens the soul to feel the inner need to freely and thankfully respond to God's invitation to commune with Him.

With love in Christ,  
Abbot Tryphon

### A Prayer for the Week

Dear Lord, You have blessed us with the year that came before, and You bless us with a New Year just ahead. This gift of time that You give us is meant to help us wake up to our real selves created to be with You forever. I confess Lord I've wasted enough time focused on lesser gods and serving my own comfort rather than the life-giving struggle of devotion only to You. Forgive me, Lord, and help me as I step into this New Year to grow in my love for You alone so that I can then love others as they are meant to be loved. I never want to serve the wrong master ever again. Amen

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***"Let us be convinced that  
nothing can happen to us  
apart from the providence  
of God."***

-St. Dorotheos of Gaza



***House Blessings are coming up in 2022! Please sign up on the sheet upstairs so that we can begin to organize and schedule House blessings. Please be sure to leave your name and phone number. Alternatively, you can call Fr. Nicholas at 860-861-7468 and he will take your information.***

## **2 Timothy 4:5-8**

But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

## **Galatians 5:22-6:2**

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

## **Mark 1:1-8**

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the Prophets: "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You. The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight.'" John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

## **Luke 6:17-23**

And He came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases, as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits. And they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed them all. Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said: "Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, for in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.

## **Children's Word**

### **Pointing to Christ**

Have you ever gotten credit for something great...but that you didn't really do? "Good job!" somebody might say. Maybe you even get an award or a prize! But it doesn't make you feel so great, unless you earn that praise yourself.

In today's Gospel reading, we hear about Saint John. He is called the Forerunner, because he came before our Lord, Jesus Christ. Lots of people started to follow St. John, and he baptized lots and lots of people. They probably thought he was pretty great. But Saint John stopped that praise with these words, "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose."

Saint John didn't want the credit. He pointed to Christ instead. He knew that our Lord, Jesus Christ was much, much greater than he was.

If you look at the icons in the front of your church, you will see the icon of Christ. Lots of times, you will see Saint John in the icon beside Him. He points to Christ. Give Him the credit! Give Him the praise!

Can YOU do that too? Can you give God the credit for things you have done?

### **SAINT SERAPHIM A PEACEFUL SAINT**

Do you know what you're supposed to do if you see a bear? You're supposed to look as big as you can, make a lot of noise, and walk away slowly. Today, we celebrate a saint who saw lots of bears, but he didn't follow that advice! In fact, the bears came right up to him to eat out of his hand, because he had such a calm and humble and peaceful spirit.

Saint Seraphim only wanted to grow closer and closer to God. He knew that a good way to do that was by talking to God. So he prayed...a lot! For 25 years, Saint Seraphim lived in the wilderness. He had a little hut in the woods there, and he would spend most of his time praying. Once, he spent 1,000 nights—that's almost three whole years—on his knees, praying to God. Do you think you can go for even a few minutes?

Saint Seraphim reminds us to try to be peaceful and gentle. He said that when we get a peaceful spirit, "thousands around you will be saved." That means that when we are peaceful, we can make a big huge difference in other people's lives too!

But how can we be peaceful in our hearts? Well, one good way is by saying a little prayer during the day. "Lord, Jesus Christ, have mercy on me." We can say it when we are angry or when we are sad or when we're feeling just fine. We can be peaceful like Saint Seraphim!

We celebrate St. Seraphim today, January 2nd.

# You Can't Have Two Masters

December 31, 2021 · Fr. Barnabas Powell

I always found it funny and even cute when I saw the old Hollywood trick of putting an angel on one shoulder of the hero and a devil on the other shoulder. Then the hero had to choose between the two! But, really, it isn't as funny as it is revealing. It really does illustrate the internal struggle we all have when deciding which path to take in our priorities, behaviors, and decisions.

That is when we even recognize the struggle at all. Too many times, regardless of the angel and devil on our shoulders, we simply live on automatic pilot not even noticing we had a choice to make.

But, as that famous Bob Dylan song from his album "Slow Train Coming" declared "You Gotta Serve Somebody."

Look at our lesson today on this last day of the year and let's see what Jesus has to say to us in Luke 16:10-15:

*The Lord said, "He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he who is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all this, and they scoffed at him. But he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts; for what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God."*

Our Lord makes it plain that a divided heart, divided attention, divided worship is, ultimately impossible. And it's impossible because you really never give "equal" devotion to both "masters. There's always the one you favor over the other. And that can be clearly seen in your choices and behaviors. You really do have to serve somebody and you already are. The question is which "master" do you favor most of the time?

The word "mammon" here is fascinating. It literally means "money" or "wealth" and it is found in similar forms in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and even Syrian. Interestingly enough, it has also served as the name of a Syrian god of wealth. There's a big hint here. The greatest challenge in any of our lives, and, historically, in all human societies is the temptation to idolatry: the worship of lesser gods rather than the True God revealed in Jesus Christ.

And this is exactly what the Lord is warning us about today. You will either comment to struggling against the temptation to worship lesser gods in your life OR you will become a slave to your passions and gripped by the false life of living too small for your created dignity! You were made to be the companion of only ONE Master, the Lord Creator of Heaven and Earth. And you were uniquely gifted, blessed, enabled, by being created in this God's Image so that any devotion to lesser gods always corrupts your truest self. This corruption is seen in the selfish lives devoted only to selfish motives and slavery to personal comfort and ego.

You've known people like this. You've seen the movie *It's A Wonderful Life*. In this movie, there is a scene where the miserly, old man, Mr. Potter, is confronted by George Bailey about his greed. Look what George tells this greedy man: "Just remember this, Mr. Potter, that this rabble you're talking about, they do most of the working and paying and living and dying in this community. Well, is it too much to have them work and pay and live and die in a couple of decent rooms and a bath? Anyway, my father didn't think so. People were human beings to him, but to you, a warped, frustrated old man, they're cattle." What a perfect picture of someone who worships money and power, and, in the end, sells his soul for too little.

Today, as we step into a New Year, who do you serve? The truest answer to that question is no secret. The answer is seen in your choices, priorities, and actions. Who do you serve? In the New Year, let's determine to serve the Master Who loves us instead of the master who only wants a slave. This Year, let's be Orthodox on Purpose!

## **2-е Тимофею 4:5-8**

Но ты будь бдителен во всем, переноси скорби, совершай дело благовестника, исполняй служение твое. Ибо я уже становлюсь жертвою, и время моего отшествия настало. Подвигом добрым я подвизался, течение совершил, веру сохранил; а теперь готовится мне венец правды, который даст мне Господь, праведный Судия, в день оный; и не только мне, но и всем, возлюбившим явление Его.

## **К Галатам 5:22-6:2**

Плод же духа: любовь, радость, мир, долготерпение, благость, милосердие, вера, кротость, воздержание. На таковых нет закона. Но те, которые Христовы, распяли плоть со страстями и похотями. Если мы живем духом, то по духу и поступать должны. Не будем тщеславиться, друг друга раздражать, друг другу завидовать. Братия! если и впадет человек в какое согрешение, вы, духовные, исправляйте такового в духе кротости, наблюдая каждый за собою, чтобы не быть искушенным. Носите бремена друг друга, и таким образом исполните закон Христов.

## **От Марка 1:1-8**

Начало Евангелия Иисуса Христа, Сына Божия, как написано у пророков: вот, Я посылаю Ангела Моего пред лицом Твоим, который приготовит путь Твой пред Тобою. Глас вопиющего в пустыне: приготовьте путь Господу, прямыми сделайте стези Ему. Явился Иоанн, крестя в пустыне и проповедуя крещение покаяния для прощения грехов. И выходили к нему вся страна Иудейская и Иерусалимляне, и крестились от него все в реке Иордане, исповедуя грехи свои. Иоанн же носил одежду из верблюжьего волоса и пояс кожаный на чреслах своих, и ел акриды и дикий мед. И проповедывал, говоря: идет за мною Сильнейший меня, у Которого я недостоин, наклонившись, развязать ремень обуви Его; я крестил вас водою, а Он будет крестить вас Духом Святым.

## **От Луки 6:17-23**

И, сойдя с ними, стал Он на ровном месте, и множество учеников Его, и много народа из всей Иудеи и Иерусалима и приморских мест Тирских и Сидонских, которые пришли послушать Его и исцелиться от болезней своих, также и страждущие от нечистых духов; и исцелялись. И весь народ искал прикасаться к Нему, потому что от Него исходила сила и исцеляла всех. И Он, возведя очи Свои на учеников Своих, говорил: Блаженны нищие духом, ибо ваше есть Царствие Божие. Блаженны алчущие ныне, ибо насытитесь. Блаженны плачущие ныне, ибо воссмеетесь. Блаженны вы, когда возненавидят вас люди и когда отлучат вас, и будут поносить, и пронесут имя ваше, как бесчестное, за Сына Человеческого. Возрадуйтесь в тот день и возвеселитесь, ибо велика вам награда на небесах. Так поступали с пророками отцы их.

## **II Timotheut 4:5-8**

Po ti rri zgjuar në të gjitha, vuaj, bëj punë ungjillëtari, shërbesën tënde permbushe. Sepse unë tani jam duke derdhur gjakun, edhe koha e ikjes sime arriti. Luftën e mirë luftova, udhën e mbarova, besimin e ruajta. Pastaj më mbetet kurora e drejtësisë, të cilën do të ma japë në atë ditë Zoti, gjykatësi i drejtë; edhe jo vetëm mua, por dhe gjithë atyre që duan shfaqjen e tij.

## **Galatianeve 5:22-6:2**

Por fryti i Frymës është dashuri, gëzim, paqe, zemërgjerësi, ëmbëlsi, mirësi, besnikëri, butësi, vetëpërmbytje; kundër të tillave nuk ka ligj. Edhe ata që janë të Krishtit, e kanë kryqëzuar mishin bashkë me pësimet e me dëshirimet. Në rrojmë sipas Frymës, sipas Frymës edhe të ecim. Le të mos kërkojmë lavdi të kotë, duke ngarë njëri-tjetrin, duke pasur smirë njëri-tjetrin. Vëllezër, edhe sikur të bjerë njeri në ndonjë faj, ju që jeni të frymës ngrieni të tillin me frymë butësie; duke u kujdesur për veten tënde se mos ngitesh edhe ti. Mbajani barrët njëri-tjetrit, edhe kështu përmbushni ligjin e Krishtit.

## **Markut 1:1-8**

Fillimi i ungjillit të Jisu Krishtit, Birit të Perëndisë, siç është shkruar në profetët: “Ja unë tek dërgoj engjëllin tim përpara faqes sate, i cili do të përgatisë udhën tënde përpara teje”. “Zëri i atij që thërret në shkretëtirë: Bëni gati udhën e Zotit, bëni të drejta rrugët e tij”. Joani ishte duke pagëzuar në shkretëtirë, edhe duke predikuar pagëzim pendimi për ndjesën e mëkateve. Edhe dilnin tek ai gjithë vendi i Judesë dhe jerusalemasit, edhe të gjithë pagëzoheshin nga ai në lumin e Jordanit, duke rrëfyer mëkatet e tyre. Edhe Joani ishte veshur me lesh gamileje, edhe kishte brez të lëkurtë rreth mesit të tij dhe hante karkaleca e mjaltë të egër. Edhe predikonte, duke thënë: Prapa meje vjen më i forti se unë, të cilit s’jam i zoti të ulem e t’i zgjidh rripin e sandaleve. Unë ju pagëzova me ujë, po ai do t’ju pagëzojë me Frymë të Shenjtë.

## **Llukait 6:17-23**

Edhe zbriti bashkë me ata e qëndroi në një vend të sheshtë; edhe ishin grumbulli i nxënësve të tij dhe një turmë e madhe populli nga gjithë Judea dhe nga Jerusalemi, edhe nga bregdeti i Tirit e i Sidonës, të cilët erdhën të dëgjonin atë, edhe të shëroheshin nga sëmundjet e tyre, edhe ata që mundoheshin prej frymëve të ndyra, dhe shëroheshin. Edhe gjithë turma kërkonte ta prekte; sepse dilte fuqi prej tij, edhe i shëronte të gjithë. Edhe ai, si ngriti sytë mbi nxënësit e tij, thoshte: Lum ju të varfërit, sepse juaja është mbretëria e Perëndisë. Lum ju që keni uri tani, sepse do të ngopeni. Lum ju që qani tani, sepse do të qeshni. Të lumtur jeni ju, kur t’ju urrejnë njerëzit, edhe kur t’ju përjashtojnë, edhe t’ju përqeshin, edhe t’ju nxjerrin emrin për të keq, për shkak të Birit të njeriut. Gëzohuni në atë ditë dhe kërceni; sepse ja paga juaj tek është e shumtë në qiell; sepse kështu ua bënë edhe profetëve etërit e tyre.