

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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June 20, 2021

HOLY PENTECOST – FEAST OF THE HOLY TRINITY

Today 10:00am Divine Liturgy
Feast of Pentecost
Wed. 23 7:15pm Bible Study with
GoogleMeet
Sun. 27 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 fasting this week.

Troparion – Tone 8

*Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God,
Who hast revealed the fishermen as most wise
by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit,
and through them Thou didst draw the world into Thy net.
O Lover of Man, glory to Thee!*

Kontakion – Tone 8

*When the Most High came down and confused the tongues,
He divided the nations;
but when He distributed the tongues of fire, He called all to unity.
Therefore, with one voice we glorify the All-holy Spirit.*

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

Acts 2:1-11

John 7:37-52, 8:12

Monday

Ephesians 5:9-19

Matthew 18:10-20

Tuesday

Romans 1:1-7, 13-17

Matthew 4:25-5:13

Wednesday

Romans 1:18-27

Matthew 5:20-26

Thursday

Romans 13:11-14:4

Luke 1:1-25, 57-68, 76, 80

Romans 1:28-2:9

Matthew 5:27-32

Friday

Romans 2:14-29

Matthew 5:33-41

Saturday

Romans 1:7-12

Matthew 5:42-48

Reading the Bible in a Year

June 20: Isaiah 5-8

June 21: Isaiah 9-12

June 22: Isaiah 13-16

June 23: Isaiah 17-20

June 24: Isaiah 21-14

June 25: Isaiah 15-28

June 26: Isaiah 29-32

Darkness Does Not Exist in Its Own Right

Our Orthodox Christian theology views evil not as a primeval essence that is co-eternal and equal to God, but rather a falling away from good. Evil does not exist in and of itself, and was not created by God. Our Orthodox Church rejects the Gnostic teaching that the entirety of being is made up of two realms which have forever existed together: the kingdom of light, and the kingdom of darkness.

This darkness does not exist in its own right, but is simply the absence or lack of light. Evil, according to Saint Basil the Great, 'is not a living and animated substance, but a condition of the soul which is opposed to virtue and which springs up in the slothful because of their falling away from Good. Do not, therefore, contemplate evil from without; and do not imagine some original nature of wickedness, but let each one recognize himself as the first author of the vice that is in him'.

Nothing is greater than God, including evil, and evil results when the free will of God's creation is directed against God and thereby engenders evil. This is precisely what happened when the light-bearing morning star (Lucifer), fell away from the Source of goodness, and became the evil one, Satan. Lucifer, by imposing his own will, found himself in darkness. Since his power is based in falsehood, he can only influence us by convincing people that he is as powerful as God. Yet his power is finite, and good will eventually triumph on the Last Day.

That God would allow evil to exist in the first place, is a mystery, for the scriptures do not explain this. Yet we do know through the scriptures that true love must express itself in action, and in the face of evil and suffering, a Christian is called to action by loving God and his neighbor. Evil then becomes but a simple practical problem, one that the Christian finds ways to alleviate. As Christians we are charged with bringing God's love and goodness into the world by our actions.

Saint Anthony of Egypt, said, "The devil is afraid of us when we pray and make sacrifices. He is also afraid when we are humble and good. He is especially afraid when we love Jesus very much. He runs away when we make the Sign of the Cross."

With love in Christ,
Abbot Tryphon

Those Winter Sundays

Robert Hayden, 1913 - 1980

Sundays too my father got up early
and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold,
then with cracked hands that ached
from labor in the weekday weather made
banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.

I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking.
When the rooms were warm, he'd call,
and slowly I would rise and dress,
fearing the chronic angers of that house,

Speaking indifferently to him,
who had driven out the cold
and polished my good shoes as well.
What did I know, what did I know
of love's austere and lonely offices?



It is a special thing to be a father.

*Happy Father's Day, to all fathers and
godfathers.*

June

20 - 10:00am Divine Liturgy *Feast of Pentecost*

23 - 7:15pm Bible Study with GoogleMeet

27 - 10:00am Divine Liturgy *Feast of Ss. Peter & Paul*

30 - 7:15pm Bible Study with GoogleMeet

July

02 - 6:00pm Fun Night

04 - 10:00am Divine Liturgy

07 - 7:15pm Bible Study with GoogleMeet

11 - 10:00am Divine Liturgy

A Prayer for the Week

O Lord of Mercy, Your message of Salvation includes everyone and excludes no one. And Your salvation excludes that which is spiritual poison to us all. Please help us so mature in this faith that we can tell the difference between inclusion and exclusion. We include all people but we stand in opposition to that which sickens us and enslaves us. Help us learn how to embrace others without excusing spiritual illness. Amen

Children's Word

Acts 2:1-11

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs – we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."

John 7:37-52, 8:12

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" So there was a division among the people because of Him. Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him. Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?" The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!" Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed." Nikodemos (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?" They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee." Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

The Holy Spirit is everywhere!

Can you count how many things in your house use electricity? The lights, the air conditioner, the oven, and so many other things. And don't forget all the things that use batteries too. We can't see electricity, but it's hard to live without it!

Today is the great feast of Pentecost. Today we celebrate how God sent the Holy Spirit to the disciples. We celebrate how God gives us the Holy Spirit too. The disciples saw the Holy Spirit in the form of flames of fire over their heads. We can't see the Holy Spirit, but we know He is there. We can't see the Holy Spirit, but as Christians, we can't live without Him!

Just as it's hard to think of all the things in our house that use electricity, it's hard for us to think of all the things the Holy Spirit does for us. We don't even know everything that the Holy Spirit does! We read in the Gospel today that the Holy Spirit is like "rivers of living water." It is strong and flowing everywhere! A special prayer we say to the Holy Spirit says He is "everywhere present and filling all things." The Holy Spirit is everywhere!

Let's ask God to always fill us with the Holy Spirit. That way, we always have God's love in our hearts. And the Holy Spirit will help us use our gifts to serve God. What could be better than that?

TWO DIFFERENT JULIANS

WHICH ONE WOULD YOU FOLLOW?

Do you share your name with somebody else? Probably. You might even have a kid in your class with your same name.

This week we remember two people who shared the same name, Julian. They both lived in the same city for a while. They both lived about 1,700 years ago. When they were little, they were both baptized Christians. But when they grew up, one Julian stayed faithful to God. The other Julian turned His back on Him.

The first Julian was our friend, the saint we remember today. He got in trouble for being a Christian because the officials tried to get him to worship idols. But even though they tried for a whole year, Saint Julian would not give up. He was hurt and tortured, but he looked to Christ for help. And even in the end, he stayed close to Christ.

The other Julian was an emperor, and we remember him as "Julian the Apostate" (an apostate is somebody who is kind of a traitor against his faith). He grew up as a Christian, but when he became emperor, he turned against Christ and fought against Christians.

Let's be like Saint Julian and stick with Christ to the end!

We remember St. Julian of Tarsus tomorrow, June 21st (OC: July 4th)

A Faith Meant to Include and Exclude

Fr. Barnabas Powell

Do you know the difference between a barrier and a threshold? It's actually quite an important distinction.

The old saying goes "good fences make good neighbors" and there's no disputing that clear boundaries are necessary for relationships for there to be healthy communion between persons. But, what happens when a boundary gets used to diminish the value of others or even exclude someone from the "group" simply because they are who they are? Well, anyone who says there is no ambiguity here simply isn't paying attention to real life. But there is a way to navigate this ambiguity. It just takes a little faith!

Look at our lesson today in Acts 21:26-32:

In those days, Paul took the men, and the next day he purified himself with them and went into the temple, to give notice when the days of purification would be fulfilled and the offering presented for every one of them. When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, who had seen him in the temple, stirred up all the crowd, and laid hands on him, crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching men everywhere against the people and the law and this place; moreover he also brought Greeks into the temple, and he has defiled this holy place." For they had previously seen Trophimos the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple. Then all the city was aroused, and the people ran together; they seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut. And as they were trying to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion. He at once took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them; and when they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

Here, St. Paul is taking the advice of St. James to go through a purification rite of the Jewish faith to put a stop to the slander being made about Paul that he was a destroyer of the Jewish faith. Paul had been a very effectual preacher to the whole area and convinced many that Jesus was, in fact, the promised Jewish Messiah and that He had risen from the dead! Of course, those who rejected Jesus as the Messiah saw Paul as someone who was destroying Judaism with his strange doctrines. St. James suggests that St. Paul perform this purification ritual to publicly display that he wasn't destroying the Faith, but fulfilling it!

Of course, this didn't work. Even though Paul sincerely and piously does this faithful spiritual labor to show he has no intentions of dismissing thousands of years of pious spiritual labors, his enemies are convinced he's broken a boundary of Judaism by bringing a "gentile" (a Greek) into the Temple thus violating a sacred boundary.

These enemies of St. Paul don't, or won't, realize that God Himself has every intention of bringing "Greeks" into the Faith! The previous boundaries were meant to teach, not forever prevent!

And here is where our Faith grants us wisdom in the ambiguities of life. We have to have boundaries if we are going to be able to discern where the dangers are in life. We have to have those warning symbols to say "Be careful, you're approaching a cliff." Boundaries, distinctions, canon law, moral principles all serve to teach and inform and protect. That's their purpose. At the same time, we humans have proven how good we are at making boundaries barriers if we take our eye off the purpose of the boundaries. We start acting as if the boundaries are ends in themselves. And that's never the case. These enemies of St. Paul had no intentions of ever seeing the Jewish teachings concerning themselves and the Gentiles as anything other than an eternal barrier between these two groups of people. They were wrong, and they were wrong because they misunderstood the purpose of the boundaries in the first place. By the way, this scene will see Paul arrested and then taken to the Roman Emperor for trial. He will be killed for his faith.

Today, it's so easy to go into an automatic pilot when it comes to the wisdom of the Faith. We assume the wisdom of the Faith is meant to exclude people when actually it's meant to provide spiritual medicine to heal ALL people. We have no human enemies if we're Orthodox on Purpose.

Деяния 2:1-11

При наступлении дня Пятидесятницы все они были единодушно вместе. И внезапно сделался шум с неба, как бы от несущегося сильного ветра, и наполнил весь дом, где они находились. И явились им разделяющиеся языки, как бы огненные, и почили по одному на каждом из них. И исполнились все Духа Святаго, и начали говорить на иных языках, как Дух давал им провещевать. В Иерусалиме же находились Иудеи, люди набожные, из всякого народа под небом. Когда сделался этот шум, собрался народ, и пришел в смятение, ибо каждый слышал их говорящих его наречием. И все изумлялись и дивились, говоря между собою: сии говорящие не все ли Галилеяне? Как же мы слышим каждый собственное наречие, в котором родились. Парфяне, и Мидяне, и Еламиты, и жители Месопотамии, Иудеи и Каппадокии, Понта и Асии, Фригии и Памфилии, Египта и частей Ливии, прилежащих к Киринее, и пришедшие из Рима, Иудеи и прозелиты, критяне и аравитяне, слышим их нашими языками говорящих о великих [делах] Божиих?

От Иоанна 7:37-52, 8:12

В последний же великий день праздника стоял Иисус и возгласил, говоря: кто жаждет, иди ко Мне и пей. Кто верует в Меня, у того, как сказано в Писании, из чрева потекут реки воды живой. Сие сказал Он о Духе, Которого имели принять верующие в Него: ибо еще не было на них Духа Святаго, потому что Иисус еще не был прославлен. Многие из народа, услышав сии слова, говорили: Он точно пророк. Другие говорили: это Христос. А иные говорили: разве из Галилеи Христос придет? Не сказано ли в Писании, что Христос придет от семени Давидова и из Вифлеема, из того места, откуда был Давид? Итак произошла о Нем распря в народе. Некоторые из них хотели схватить Его; но никто не наложил на Него рук. Итак служители возвратились к первосвященникам и фарисеям, и сии сказали им: для чего вы не привели Его? Служители отвечали: никогда человек не говорил так, как Этот Человек. Фарисеи сказали им: неужели и вы прельстились? Уверовал ли в Него кто из начальников, или из фарисеев? Но этот народ невежда в законе, проклят он. Никодим, приходивший к Нему ночью, будучи один из них, говорит им: судит ли закон наш человека, если прежде не выслушают его и не узнают, что он делает? На это сказали ему: и ты не из Галилеи ли? рассмотри и увидишь, что из Галилеи не приходит пророк. Опять говорил Иисус [к народу] и сказал им: Я свет миру; кто последует за Мною, тот не будет ходить во тьме, но будет иметь свет жизни.

Veprat e Apostujve 2:1-11

Kur erdhi dita e Rrëshajëve, ata ishin të gjithë bashkë, në një mendje të vetme, në të njëjtin vend. Dhe befas nga qielli erdhi një ushtimë, si ajo e një ere që fryn furishëm, dhe e mbushi gjithë shtëpinë ku ata po rrinin. Dhe atyre u dukën gjuhë, si prej zjarri, të cilat ndaheshin dhe zinin vend mbi secilin prej tyre. Kështu të gjithë u mbushën me Frymën e Shenjtë dhe filluan të flasin në gjuhë të tjera, ashtu si Fryma e Shenjtë ua jepte të shpreheshin. Por në Jeruzalem banonin disa Judenj, njerëz të perëndishëm, nga të gjitha kombet nën qiell. Kur u dëgjua ajo ushtimë, turma u mblodh dhe u hutua, sepse secili nga ata i dëgjonte të flisnin në gjuhën e vet. Dhe të gjithë habiteshin dhe mrekulloheshin dhe i thoshnin njëri-tjetrit: “Ja, a nuk janë të gjithë Galileas këta që flasin? Si vallë secili nga ne i dëgjon të flasin në gjuhën e vet amtare? Ne Partët, Medët, Elamitët dhe banorët e Mesopotamisë, të Judesë dhe të Kapadokisë, të Pontit dhe të Azisë, të Frigjisë e të Pamfilisë, të Egjiptit dhe të pjesëve të Libisë përballë Kirenës, dhe ne të ardhur nga Roma, Judenj dhe prozelitë, Kretas dhe Arabë, i dëgjojmë të flasin për gjërat e mëdha të Perëndisë në gjuhët tona!”

Gjoni 7:37-52, 8:12

Ditën e fundit, në ditën e madhe të festës, Jezusi u çua në këmbë dhe thirri duke thënë: “Nëse dikush ka etje, le të vijë tek unë e të pijë. Ai që beson në mua, siç ka thënë Shkrimi, nga brendësia e tij do të burojnë lumenj uji të gjallë.” Por këtë ai e tha për Frymën, që do të merrnin ata që do të besonin në të; sepse Fryma e Shenjtë në fakt nuk ishte dhënë ende, sepse Jezusi ende nuk ishte përlëvduar. Shumë veta nga turma, kur i dëgjuan këto fjalë, thoshnin: “Ky është me të vërtetë Profeti!” Të tjerë thoshnin: “Ky është Krishti.” Kurse të tjerë thoshnin: “Vallë nga Galilea vjen Krishti? A nuk thotë Shkrimi se Krishti vjen nga pasardhja e Davidit dhe nga Bethlehemi, fshati ku jetonte Davidi?” Kështu pati përçarje në turmë për shkak të tij. Dhe disa prej tyre donin ta kapnin, por askush nuk vuri dorë mbi të. Atëherë rojet u kthyen te krerët e priftërinjve dhe te farisenjtë, dhe këta u thanë atyre: “Pse nuk e sollët?” Rojet u përgjigjen: “Asnjëri nuk ka folur kurrë si ai njeri.” Prandaj farisenjtë iu përgjigjën atyre: “Mos u gënijet edhe ju? Mos vallë ndonjë nga krerët ose nga farisenjtë besoi në të? Por kjo turmë, që nuk e njeh ligjin, është e mallkuar.” Nikodemi, një prej tyre, i cili natën kishte shkuar te Jezusi, u tha atyre: “Ligji ynë dënon vallë një njeri para se ta ketë dëgjuar dhe ta dijë ç’ka bërë ai?” Ata u përgjigjën dhe i thanë: “Mos je edhe ti nga Galilea? Hulumto Shkrimet dhe do të shohësh se nga Galilea s’ka dalë kurrë profet.” Dhe Jezusi u foli atyre përsëri duke thënë: “Unë jam drita e botës; kush më ndjek nuk do të ecë në errësirë, por do të ketë dritën e jetës.”