

I often think that we are misled by the institutional aspects of the Church's existence. I know that those who have the most "responsibility" (or think that they do) take great care for the Church's life. But the "life" that matters is something that cannot be cared for – it cares for us. The Church is preserved by holiness (sanctity) within the midst of the faithful. As such, the Church is indestructible, even when its institutions are attacked (from within or without).

In our own lives, we fail to see things clearly. It is easy to discern a line of thought or institutional suggestion that is faulty and in error. However, we fail to see that our own sins are the greater danger. Holiness is the only effective argument – even its silence is overwhelming in its eloquence. Holiness is "right glory" in the life of an individual.

It is of interest to see with what great interest the statements of various holy elders are sifted in search of political and ecclesiastical prophecies and critiques. These extracted sayings are then brought forth into the swamp of social media as trump cards in our daily arguments. How few seem to be combing the sayings of the elders in order to examine their own lives! It is true that holy elders are a preserving force in the life of the Church – but not by their arguments. It is their very life and prayer that uphold us.

A single prayer, a single candle is worth far more than any argument set forth, while our anxiety and anger burn false candles before the idols of our imagination. In this season of the year, many memes will appear celebrating St. Nicholas' famous slap of the heretic Arius. That slap did nothing to rebuke heresy. It was St. Nicholas' mercy and love of the poor that found pardon and support from the Theotokos. Any fool can slap a heretic; only a saint can refute them.

Be the saint. It is our only weapon.

---Fr. Stephen Freeman

UPCOMING EVENTS AND SERVICES

+ Sunday School today – for all ages

+Regular Sunday Divine Liturgy and Great Vespers on Saturday as usual.

This Week...

- Divine Liturgy for St Andrew The First Called- Thursday Nov. 30th. Great Vespers Wed. 6pm (with a Talk on the Life of St Andrew)

St. Nicholas Party

Sunday, Dec. 3rd during Coffee Hour

(This will be Sunday School- Children will be singing some selections, there will be games and activities for all)

- Divine Liturgy for St. Nicholas Wednesday, Dec. 6th at 9:30am
Great Vespers- 6pm Tuesday

- Divine Liturgy for St. Herman Wednesday, Dec. 13th at 6:00pm
Great Vespers- 6pm Tuesday
- Mom's Group meeting, Saturday-Dec. 16 10:30am

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD SERVICE SCHEDULE

- Akathist to the Mother of God - Wed. Dec. 20th
- Royal Hours - Friday, Dec. 22nd at 9am
- Holy Supper begins at 5:00pm on Dec. 24th with Nativity Vigil to follow. (Fr. Joseph Gall will be celebrating with us)
- Divine Liturgy Nativity of our Lord Dec. 25th 9:30am

- The Royal Hours of Theophany – Friday, Jan. 5th 9:00am
- Vigil for Theophany- 6:00pm (with the Great Blessing of Waters)
- St. Basils Divine Liturgy – (With blessing of waters- Cussewago Creek) Tuesday, Jan. 6th – 9:30am
Blessing of Homes begins...Please sign up.

MISSIONS TEAM –“*We bless Christ when we bless the poor*”

Fall/Winter Missions Drive: The missions committee is currently collecting clean winter clothing, blankets, and quilts which will be donated to The Upper Room of Erie. All donations can be dropped off in the first Sunday School Class room on the left.

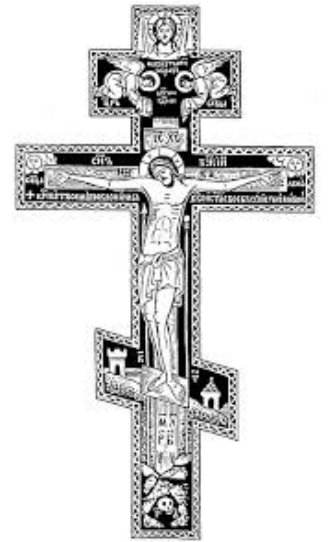
House Keeping-

--A friendly reminder to parents of little ones, please try to keep loud disruptions to a minimum, keep up the reminders to participate and pray.

--A reminder to everyone to continue to fulfill your financial pledge to the Church. Pledge forms can be placed in the offering basket. **IF you have not received one, there will be some available by the bulletins in the narthex**

--Please sign up to help for coffee hour

Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church



25636 N. Mosiertown Rd Crossingville,
PA 1641 Rev. Fr. Daniel Mathewson –
Rector **Lord's Day – Nov 26th, 2017**

Parish phone: 814-734-3801 Find us on

the Web at: www.orthodoxcrossingville.org or on Face book: Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!

SUNDAY: NOVEMBER 26 TONE 8

25th Sunday after Pentecost/Venerable Alypius the Stylite * Repose of St. Innocent the Wonderworker, Bishop of Irkutsk (1731)

PLEASE INCLUDE THESE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN YOUR DAILY PRAYERS:

Those in need –Fr. Andrew, Fr. David, Mat. Donna, Fr. John, Fr. Nicholas, Fr. Paul, Fr. George, Mat. Suzanne, Meghan, Pearl, Karen, Mary, Stavros, Marilyn, Theona, Sara, Evan, Eugene, John, David, Ann, Thomas, Timothy, Jeremiah, Renee, Delani, Emily, George, Tanya, The Homebound... Vincent, Tanya, Mary-Louise, Richard, Helen, John, Irene, Ruth, Josephine, William, Claudia... Travelers.. ...Catechumens –Rick and Christian Our Missionaries Abroad...Fr. David and Mt. Rozanne, Military servers...Greg ...Departed Orthodox...Newly Departed – Ann, Katherine. Vernon, Paul, James, Andrew, Peter, Paul, Margaret, Michael Mary Ann, Timothy special requests... Anthony, Ian, Paul, Daleen, Penni, James, Sean, Liam, Susan, James, Joel, Jen, Roger, Jasmine, Cassandra

Tone 8 Troparion (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!

Tone 1 Troparion (Venerable Alypius)
Thou wast a pillar of patient endurance,
having imitated the forefathers, O Venerable One:
Job in suffering and Joseph in temptations.
Thou didst live like the Bodiless Ones while yet in the flesh,
Alypius, our Father.
Beseech Christ God that our souls may be saved!

Tone 8 Kontakion (Resurrection)
By rising from the tomb, Thou didst raise the dead and
resurrected Adam.
Eve exults in Thy Resurrection,
and the world celebrates Thy rising from the dead, O
greatly Merciful One!

Tone 8 Kontakion (Venerable Alypius)
The Church glorified and praises thee today, O Alypius,
as a perfect example of virtue and the boast of ascetics.
Through thy prayers, grant remission of sins to all who
venerate thy life and thy struggles!

Tone 8 Prokeimenon (Resurrection)
Pray and make your vows before the Lord, our God! (Ps
75/76:11)
v: In Judah God is known; His name is great in Israel. (Ps
75/76:1)

Tone 8
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!
v: Come, let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to
God our Savior! (Ps 94/95:1)
v: Let us come before His face with thanksgiving; let us make a
joyful noise to Him with songs of praise! (Ps 94/95:2)

Today's Scripture Readings:

Ephesians 4:1-6 (Epistle)

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk
worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all
lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one
another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in
the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you
were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one
baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and
through all, and in you all.

Luke 13:10-17 (Gospel)

Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.
And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity
eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise
herself up. But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and
said to her, “Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.”
And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made
straight, and glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue
answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the
Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, “There are six days on
which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on
them, and not on the Sabbath day.” The Lord then answered
him and said, “Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the
Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away
to water it? So ought not this woman, being a daughter of
Abraham, whom Satan has bound – think of it – for eighteen
years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?” And when He
said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all
the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done
by Him.

A Difficult Orthodoxy

The difference between “right glory” and “right doctrine,” noted in my previous article, goes much deeper than services of worship. It is true that the Church has, throughout her history, taken great care with liturgical practice so that what is done gives expression to what is believed. The two should be seamless. This, however, becomes ever more difficult when it extends to our lives. Frequently, we settle for “right doctrine,” and “right glory,” but ignore the right inward life and disposition (technically called “orthopraxis”).

Fr. Georges Florovsky described doctrine as a “verbal icon” of Christ. Anyone can master a system of thought, its rules of speech and patterns of

understanding. But to *rightly* speak and *live* within the Orthodox faith requires something of a very different sort. The verbal icon is indeed a true icon, and it must be presented rightly in every way. The recitation of the Nicene Creed in the Liturgy is introduced in this manner:

“Let us love one another, so that with one mind we may confess: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Trinity, one in essence and undivided.” No matter how carefully we pronounce the words, or what intention we may bring to them, if they are not spoken in the context of the mutual love within the Body of Christ, they cannot be rightly spoken: the verbal icon will be distorted. We cannot speak rightly of Christ, for example, while we hate our enemies, even if those enemies are the enemies of Christ Himself. For we cannot be of use to Christ by disobeying His commandments.

Of course, this is a great handicap for Christians. It has always been the case that in fighting evil, we cannot *use* evil, regardless of how handy it might seem, or how temptingly effective it might appear. You cannot defend Christ by crucifying Him. The nature of the Cross and its reality in our lives is such that it cannot be rationalized: it cannot be turned into an ideology among ideologies. It is a *mode of existence* or it is nothing at all. No matter how noble and grand the sentiments associated with the gospel, only the gospel embodied in a Christ-formed life is of any value.

In recent comments, I was asked what could be done about things that endangered the Church. My response, perhaps not clear at the time, was to say that what can be done is to *be* the Church. Not even the gates of hell can withstand the Church, according to Christ’s promise. St. Seraphim’s admonition, “Acquire the Spirit of Peace and a thousand souls around you will be saved,” is deeply frustrating to some. It is taken for a path of “Quietism” in which “doing nothing” is the answer to everything. I have heard this path assaulted particularly by those who want to be more active in evangelism. But if we have not acquired the Spirit of Peace then we actually have nothing to give someone even were they to visit the Church. The anxiety of our age is the anxiety of competing “projects.” Political agendas, moral agendas, culture wars – all of them gather on the field of battle and all of them vie for the leadership of modernity. For some, the better world they wish to build is some sort of vision out of Aldous Huxley, or so it would seem: test-tube babies, gender fluidity, and a humanity reinvented to maximize its pleasure. Others imagine a classical society, even some version of a *Christian* society. As Orthodox, we worry about our tiny place within the culture and whether we can find a saving “option.”

The management of culture is not something that has been given us by God. The notion that such might be the case is simply our own version of the modern project. The Kingdom of God is something quite different. It is decidedly not a human project – it cannot be built, furthered, or helped along. It may come forth, be manifested or revealed, but only as the work of God. It might be possible to say that God has a “project” (if that’s not irreverent). It is the Church. As such, it seems weak, and extremely susceptible to decay and corruption. It has a long history of incompetence. And yet, as cultures have come and gone, the Church remains (and not as a result of long-range planning).