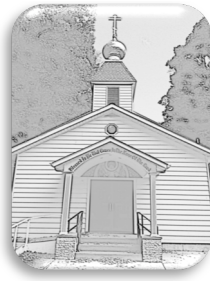




Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church **CROSSINGVILLE**  
**01-15-2023**



Christ is in our midst!  
He is and always shall be!

**31st SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – Tone 6. Ven. Paul of Thebes (341) and John Calabytes (“the Hut-dweller”–5th c.).**  
Ven. Pansophius of Alexandria, Martyr (ca. 249-251). Ven. Prochorus, Abbot, in the Vranski desert on the River Pshina in Bulgaria (10th c.). Ven. Gabriel, founder of Lesnovo Monastery in Bulgaria (11th c.).

**HOLY HYMNS**

**Tone 6 Troparion (Resurrection)**

The Angelic Powers were at Your tomb; the guards became as dead men. Mary stood by Your grave, seeking Your most pure body. You captured hell, not being tempted by it. You came to the Virgin, granting life. O Lord, Who rose from the dead, // glory to You.

**Tone 4 Troparion (Sts. Paul and John)**

O God of our Fathers, always act with kindness towards us; take not Your mercy from us, but guide our lives in peace // through the prayers of the venerable Paul and John!

**Tone 6 Kontakion (Resurrection)**

When Christ God, the Giver of Life, raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand, He bestowed resurrection on the human race. // He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of all.

**Tone 2 Kontakion (St. John)**

Longing for poverty in imitation of Christ, you abandoned your parents' wealth, O wise Father John; grasping the Gospel in your hands, you followed Christ God. // unceasingly praying for us all.

**Tone 3 Kontakion (St. Paul)**

Today we gather and praise you with hymns as an unwaning ray of the spiritual Sun; for you shine on those in the darkness of ignorance, leading all mankind to the heights, // venerable Paul, adornment of Thebes and firm foundation of the fathers and ascetics.

**Tone 6 Prokeimenon (Resurrection)**

O Lord, save Your people, / and bless Your inheritance! (Ps. 27:9a)

V. To You, O Lord, will I call. O my God, be not silent to me! (Ps. 27:1a)

**Tone 6**

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the heavenly God. (Ps. 90:1)

V. He will say to the Lord: “My Protector and my Refuge; my God, in Whom I trust.” (Ps. 90:2)

**HOLY SCRIPTURE**

**1 Timothy 1:15-17 (Epistle)**

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

**Luke 18:18-27 (Gospel)**

Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’ ‘Honor your father and your mother.’” And he said, “All these things I have kept from my youth.”

So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” And those who heard it said, “Who then can be saved?” But He said, “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.”

**Pray with out ceasing...**

PLEASE INCLUDE THESE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN YOUR DAILY PRAYERS: Those in need Fr.

Andrew, Fr. David, Fr. Joseph, Fr. Zachariah, Iguman Patrick, Hiremonk Philip, Fr. Dušan, Mat. Gail, Mat. Donna, Mat. Pirsilla, Mat. Trudi, John(Chuck), Karen, Susan, Mary B. Bill S., Timothy, Delani, Jeremiah, Sandy, William, Paul, Tanya, Anna, Kyra and her child, Grace and her child, Mary and her child Homebound -Mary G, Catechumens - Bob, Gene, Julie, Lilly, Helena Inquirers - Kathy, Dan, Jarrod, Kimber, Prudence Special requests... Gilbert, Joanne, Anthony, Paul, James, Sean, Liam, Kim, Helen, Dan, Gregory, Laura, Laken, Bob, Gary, Bill, Paul, Cletus, Nina, Declan, Bria, Jemma, Savannah, Vivian, Deana (Add your own requests here)... Departed : Margaret, Valentina

**Parish Services and Activities**

[www.orthodoxcrossingville.org](http://www.orthodoxcrossingville.org)

Today - Divine Liturgy – 9:30am -Coffee Hour – Parish Education

Wed. Jan. 18<sup>th</sup> – Daily Vespers- Discussion on the Desert Fathers

Sat. Jan. 28<sup>th</sup> – Pro-Life March in Erie – 11am

Wed. Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> Vigil for Presentation of the Lord

Tues. Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup> – Divine Liturgy- 9:30am

Sun. Feb 5<sup>th</sup> – Beginning of the Lenten Triodian

Feb. 27<sup>th</sup> - Great Lent Begins

\*Please Check out our newsletter online or request a paper copy.

**Venerable Paul of Thebes**

Saint Paul of Thebes was born in Egypt around 227 in the Thebaid of Egypt. Left orphaned, he suffered many things from a greedy relative over his inheritance. During the persecution against Christians under the emperor Decius (249-251), Saint Paul learned of his brother-in-law's insidious plan to deliver him into the hands of the persecutors, and so he fled the city and fled into the wilderness.

Settling into a mountain cave, Saint Paul dwelt there for ninety-one years, praying incessantly to God both day and night. He sustained himself on dates and bread, which a raven brought him, and he clothed himself with palm leaves.

Saint Anthony the Great (January 17), who also lived as an ascetic in the Thebaid desert, had a revelation from God concerning Saint Paul. Saint Anthony thought that there was no other desert dweller such as he. Then God said to him, “Anthony, there is a servant of God more excellent than you, and you should go and see him.”

Saint Anthony went into the desert and came to Saint Paul's cave. Falling to the ground before the entrance to the cave, he asked to be admitted. The Elders introduced themselves, and then embraced one another. They conversed through the night, and Saint Anthony revealed how he had been led there by God. Saint Paul disclosed to Saint Anthony that for sixty years a bird had brought him half a loaf of bread each day. Now the Lord had sent a double portion in honor of Saint Anthony's visit. The next morning, Saint Paul spoke to Anthony of his approaching death, and instructed him to bury him. He also asked Saint Anthony to return to his monastery and bring back the cloak he had received from Saint Athanasius. He did not really need a garment, but wished to depart from his body while Saint Anthony was absent.

As he was returning with the cloak, Saint Anthony beheld the soul of Saint Paul surrounded by angels, prophets, and apostles, shining like the sun and ascending to God. He entered the cave and found Abba Paul on his knees with his arms outstretched. Saint Anthony mourned for him, and wrapped him in the cloak. He wondered how he would bury the body, for he had not remembered to bring a shovel. Two lions came running from the wilderness and dug a grave with their claws.

Saint Anthony buried the holy Elder, and took his garment of palm leaves, then he returned to his own monastery. Saint Anthony kept this garb as a precious inheritance, and wore it only twice a year, on Pascha and Pentecost.

Saint Paul of Thebes died in the year 341, when he was 113 years old. He did not establish a single monastery, but soon after his end there were many imitators of his life, and they filled the desert with monasteries. Saint Paul is honored as the first desert-dweller and hermit.

In the twelfth century Saint Paul's relics were transferred to Constantinople and placed in the Peribleptos monastery of the Mother of God, on orders of the emperor Manuel (1143-1180). Later, they were taken to Venice, and finally to Hungary, at Ofa. Part of his head is in Rome.

Saint Paul of Thebes, whose Life was written by Saint Jerome, is not to be confused with Saint Paul the Simple (October 4).

## **The Orthodox Faith by Fr. Thomas Hopko**

### **The Persecutions**

The second century saw the further development and expansion of the Christian Faith, and more widespread persecution of the Church by the Roman imperial authorities, for whom Christianity was an "illegal religion." The Christians were criminals in the eyes of the Romans, not only religiously, but also politically. They transgressed the laws of the state in that they refused to honor the earthly emperor as lord and god, which was required of them as inhabitants of the Empire. The Christians prayed for the civil authorities and gave "honor to whom honor is due" (Rom 13.1-7; 1 Tim 2.1-3; Mk 12.13-17), but they refused to give the earthly king the glory and worship which was due to God, and to his Christ, alone. Thus Roman law declared: *It is not lawful to be a Christian.*

One of the earliest reports about Christianity to appear in non-Christian writings is found in the correspondence between Pliny the Younger, the Roman governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor, and Emperor Trajan (r. 98-117). This correspondence reveals that Christianity was indeed proscribed, and though Christians should not be sought out and were innocent of the gross charges against them—such as the sacrifice of children and the eating of human flesh (a misunderstanding of the Eucharist, which was conducted in "secret meetings")—the Christians nevertheless were to be executed when seized, if they refused to renounce their Faith.

The persecution of Christians in the second century was largely localized, occurring sporadically and at varying locations according to what was allowed or authorized by the local imperial authorities. The account of The Martyrs of Vienne and Lyons in Gaul gives a vivid description of one such outbreak of persecution, in about the year 177.

Nevertheless, the persecutions were widespread, and the Christians were generally hated even by the most tolerant and open-minded of the Roman rulers. They were despised mostly, it seems, for what was considered their stubbornness and intolerance due to their exclusive devotion to Jesus Christ as Lord. They were persecuted also for what was considered to be the political danger they posed to the unity of the imperial society, especially as their numbers steadily grew.

### **Spirituality**

Spirituality in the Orthodox Church means the everyday activity of life in communion with God. The term spirituality refers not merely to the activity of man's spirit alone, his mind, heart and soul, but it refers as well to the whole of man's life as inspired and guided by the Spirit of God. Every act of a Christian must be a spiritual act. Every thought must be spiritual, every word, every deed, every activity of the body, every action of the person. This means that all that a person thinks, says and does must be inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit so that the will of God the Father might be accomplished as revealed and taught by Jesus Christ the Son of God.

*... whatever you do, do all to the glory of God (1 Cor 10.31).*

Doing all things to the glory of God is the meaning and substance of life for a human being. This "doing" is what Christian spirituality is about.

### **God**

Christian spirituality is centered in God; in fact, its very goal is communion with God, which is attainable through the accomplishment of His will. To be what God wants us to be and to do what God want us to do is the sole meaning of our human existence. The fulfillment of the prayer "Thy will be done" is the heart and soul of all spiritual effort and activity.

In the Old Testament law, it is written:

*I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy (Lev 11:44).*

In the New Testament, the first letter of Saint Peter refers to this fundamental command of God.

*... as He who called you is holy, be holy yourself in all your conduct; since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet 1:16).*

That human beings should be holy by sharing in the happiness of God Himself is the meaning of union with God. All are "called to be saints" (Rom 1.7) by becoming "partakers of the nature of God" (2 Pet 1.1). This is what Jesus meant when He said in Sermon on the Mount, "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5.48).

The teaching that man must be holy and perfect like God Himself through the accomplishment of the will of God is the central teaching of the Orthodox Christian faith. This teaching has been stated in many different ways in the Orthodox spiritual tradition. Saint Maximus the Confessor (7th c.) said it this way: "Man is called to become by divine grace all that God Himself is by nature." This means very simply that God wills and helps His creatures to be like He is, and that is the purpose of their being and life. As God is holy, man must be holy. As God is perfect, man must be perfect, pure, merciful, patient, kind, gentle, free, self-determining, ever-existing, and always, for eternity, the absolute superabundant realization of everything good in inexhaustible fullness and richness . . . so man must be this way as well, ever growing and developing in divine perfection and virtue for all eternity by the will and power of God Himself. The perfection of man is his growth in the unending perfection of God.