

## The Last Judgment

Today's Gospel reading is Matthew 25:31-46, the parable of the Last Judgment. It reminds us that while trusting in Christ's love and mercy, we must not forget His righteous judgment when He comes again in glory. If our hearts remain hardened and unrepentant, we should not expect the Lord to overlook our transgressions simply because He is a good and loving God. Although He does not desire the death of a sinner, He also expects us to turn from our wickedness and live (Ezek. 33:11). This same idea is expressed in the prayer read by the priest after the penitent has confessed his or her sins (Slavic practice).

The time for repentance and forgiveness is now, in the present life. At the Second Coming, Christ will appear as the righteous Judge, Who will render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:6). Then the time for entreating God's mercy and forgiveness will have passed.

As Father Alexander Schmemmann reminds us in his book GREAT LENT (Ch. 1:4), sin is the absence of love, it is separation and isolation. When Christ comes to judge the world, His criterion for judgment will be love. Christian love entails seeing Christ in other people, our family, our friends, and everyone else we may encounter in our lives. We shall be judged on whether we have loved, or not loved, our neighbor. We show Christian love when we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit those who are sick or in prison. If we did such things for the least of Christ's brethren, then we also did them for Christ (Mt.25:40). If we did not do such things for the least of the brethren, neither did we do them for Christ (Mt.25:45).

Today is the last day for eating meat and meat products until Pascha, though eggs and dairy products are permitted every day during the coming week. This limited fasting prepares us gradually for the more intense fasting of Great Lent.

## **Righteous Theodora, wife of the Emperor Theophilus, the Iconoclast** Commemorated on February 11

**Holy Empress Theodora was the wife of the Byzantine emperor Theophilus the Iconoclast (829-842), but she did not share in the heresy of her husband and secretly venerated the holy icons. After the death of her husband, Saint Theodora governed the realm because her son Michael was a minor.**

**She convened a Council, at which the Iconoclasts were anathematized, and the veneration of icons was reinstated. Saint Theodora established the annual celebration of this event, the Triumph of Orthodoxy, on the first Sunday of the Great Fast. Saint Theodora did much for Holy Church and fostered a firm devotion to Orthodoxy in her son Michael.**

**When Michael came of age, she was retired from governing and spent eight years in the monastery of Saint Euphrosyne, where she devoted herself to ascetic struggles, and reading books that nourished her soul.**

**A copy of the Gospels, copied in her own hand, is known to exist. She died peacefully around the year 867.**

**In 1460, her relics were given by the Turks to the people of Kerkyra (Corfu).**

## UPCOMING EVENTS AND SERVICES

~~~ No Church School Today— Resuming on Feb. 25th  
TODAY Family Bowling Outing Feb. 11th following Pancake Breakfast in Cambridge Springs. 1-4pm  
\*Next Week lenten meatless potluck for coffee hour- dessert will be provided.

### THIS MONTH—

-See LENTEN 2018 Calendar  
-No Orthodox Bible Study -Resuming Thursday March 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>  
- Altar Servers - see schedule  
- Parish Council Meeting – Mon. Mar. 5<sup>th</sup>  
- GREAT AND HOLY LENT BEGINS Feb. 19<sup>th</sup>  
-Ladies Altar Meeting- Sunday Feb. 19<sup>th</sup> (Following Coffee hour)  
-In Home Meals are available from Lizzy's Catering. See flyers in the hall.  
The book "Lenten Meditations for Orthodox Christians" is available in our book store – See Jane for more info

### MISSIONS TEAM

Anyone wishing to serve as a missionary for a summer trip may inquire of the missions team. Also, OCMC sponsors various trips around the world. See the poster in the Hall. \*Please support our Kenyan Orthodox children. Please contact Marilyn Filipos. Thank you for your donations to the Kenyan children.

### House Blessings

Fr. Daniel will continue House blessings until Feb. 18<sup>th</sup>  
please contact him to schedule a time.

"Rejoice" scripture verse for the week:

**[Psalm 2:11](#)**

**Serve the Lord with fear, And rejoice with trembling.**

The Lord wants us to love one another. Here is freedom: in love for God and neighbor. In this freedom, there is equality. In earthly orders, there may not be equality, but this is not important for the soul. Not everyone can be a king, not everyone a patriarch or a boss. But in any position it is possible to love God and to please Him, and only this is important. And whoever loves God more on earth will be in greater glory in His Kingdom.  
(St. Silouan the Athonite, Writings, VI.23)

# Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

25636 N. Mosiertown Rd Crossingville, PA 1641 Rev. Fr. Daniel Mathewson – *Rector* **Lord's Day – Feb 11th , 2018** Parish phone: 814-734-3801 Find us on the Web at: [www.orthodoxcrossingville.org](http://www.orthodoxcrossingville.org) or on Face book: Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

## **GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!**

SUNDAY OF MEATFARE — Tone 3. Sunday of the Last Judgment. **Hieromartyr Blaise, Bishop of Sebaste (ca. 316). Ven. Dimitri (Demetrius), Wonderworker of Prolix (Vologdá—1392). Rt. Blv. Great Prince Vsevolod (in holy Baptism Gabriel), Wonderworker of Pskov (1138). Righteous Theodora, wife of the Emperor Theophilus the Iconoclast (ca. 867).**

**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, Melissa, Meghan, Pearl, Karen, John, Mary, Stavros, Marilyn, Theona, Sara, Eugene, John, Ann, Thomas, Catherine, Timothy, Jeremiah, Renee, Delani, Emily, The Homebound... Vincent, Tanya, Richard, Helen, John, Irene, Ruth, Josephine, William, Claudia... Travelers..Dankos ...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, Raquel ....**

Today's Hymns Tone 3 Troparion (*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.

Tone 1 Kontakion (from the Lenten Triodion)

When Thou, O God, shalt come to earth with glory,  
all things shall tremble,  
and the river of fire shall flow before Thy judgment seat;  
the books shall be opened, and the hidden things disclosed;  
then deliver me from the unquenchable fire!//  
and make me worthy to stand at Thy right hand, O Righteous Judge!

Tone 3 Prokeimenon

Great is our Lord, and abundant in power, His understanding is beyond measure. (Ps 146/147:5)

*v: Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God! (Ps 146/147:1)*

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: v: Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise. (Ps 94/95:2)*

### ***Today's Scripture Readings:***

1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2 (Epistle)

**But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.**

**But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.**

**Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble. Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not work in the Lord?**

**If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.**

Matthew 25:31-46 (Gospel)

**When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'**

**Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'**

**Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'**

**Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?'**

**Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'**

### **How to Strengthen your Lenten Prayer Life...**

**By Fr. Stephen Freeman**

The traditional acts of asceticism associated with Great Lent (and the whole of the Christian life) are prayer, fasting,

almsgiving, and repentance. In my experience, Orthodox faithful tend to concentrate on fasting and perhaps making a good confession. If we have weaknesses, they are found in our prayers and almsgiving. These two belong together. Christ said:

And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. (Lk. 16:9)

For many, this saying seems extremely obscure. Who are these friends who will receive us? They are the poor. Like Lazarus in the parable, they will rest in Abraham's bosom. The rich man called out for help but found none. Christ suggests here, that had the rich man "made friends" with Lazarus by acts of mercy, kindness, and generosity, he would have found ready help and a path from Hades to Paradise.

If you want to strengthen your prayers, make friends of the poor. This story is a great illustration:

During the reign of Alexander I, a certain nobleman fell into disgrace with the Tsar. His wife asked Father Nazarius [Abbot of Valaam Monastery] to pray that her husband's case would turn out well. "Very well," the Elder replied, "but first we must ask those close to the Tsar for their help."

"We have done that already," she answered, "but there is little hope."

"But you have not asked those who needed to be asked," said Father Nazarius. "Give me some money, and I will ask those whom I know."

The woman gave him five pieces of gold. "No," he said, "these are no good. Don't you have small change made of copper or silver?" Father Nazarius took the money and during the day he gave it away to the poor and the unfortunate. He returned to the woman's home toward evening.

"Glory to God," he said, "those close to the Tsar have promised to help you. After this came word of the successful outcome of the dignitary's case. The man and his wife rejoiced, and wanted to know exactly who had helped him with the Tsar. They were astonished when the Elder told them that it was the poor, those who are close to the Heavenly King. Deeply touched by the Elder's piety, they maintained their great respect and love for him until the end.

*Through Christ let us continually offer to God the sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his Name. Do not forget to do good and to share; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Hebrews 13:15-16*