



# Saints Peter and Paul

## Orthodox Church

25636 N. Mosiertown Rd Crossingville, PA 1641

Archpriest Fr. Daniel Mathewson – Rector

Barbra Hargett – Choir Director

**Lord's Day – 4-18-2021**

Parish phone: 814-734-3801 Find us on the Web at:

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

### **FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT — Tone 4. St**

**Mary of Egypt.** Ven. John, disciple of Ven.

Gregory of Decapolis (9th c.). Martyrs Victor, Zoticus, Zeno, Acindynus, and Severian, of Nicomedia (303).

St. Cosmas, Bishop of Chalcedon, and his fellow ascetic, St. Auxentius (815-820). New Martyr John the New of Epirus (1526). Ven. Evfimii (Euthymius), Enlightener of Karelia; and the Righteous Anthony and Felix.

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Pray with out ceasing...

**PLEASE INCLUDE THESE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN**

**YOUR DAILY PRAYERS:** Those in need – Fr. Andrew, Fr. Isaac, Fr. David, Fr. Anthony, Fr. Joseph, Fr. Zachariah, Fr. Patrick, Prez. Alexandria, Mat. Gail, Mat. Donna, Mat. Pirsilla, Barbra, Karen, Mary B. Margret, Bill S., Lexi, Kyra and Child, Charlotte, Cayllin, John, Nickolas, Timothy, Amanda, Damian, Delani, Jeremiah, Christine, Rick, Samuel, Megan, Valentina

The Homebound Tanya, Mary G

Catechumen- Christian... Military servers... Greg

Special requests... Paul, Gilbert, Phyllis, Anthony, Ian, Paul, James, Sean, Liam, Bill, Wesley, Kim, Margaret, Loren, Julia, Shelby, Janet, Lynn, Margret. Helen, Dan, Jonathan, Donna, Nicholas, Maya, Mia, Charles, Clea...

Newly Departed : Richard, George, Ruth, Pearl, Jim(Grace's Dad), Ann, Lillian, Archbishop David, Metropolitan Maximos, Alice, Metro.

Theodosius, William, Claudia, Theona, Helen,...

Departed Orthodox –Mat. Anastasia, Jeff, Catherine, Marilyn, Rodney, Irene, Fr. Matthew Baker, John B., John S., Ann, Katherine, Vernon, Paul, James Nickolai, Andrew, Peter, Paul, Margaret, Michael Mary Ann, Timothy...

(If you would like a name added to the list above give it to Fr. Daniel in writing.)

### **Holy Hymns:**

#### **Tone 4 Troparion (Resurrection)**

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the apostles: "Death is overthrown!  
Christ God is risen, // granting the world great mercy!"

#### **Tone 8 Troparion (St. Mary of Egypt)**

The image of God was truly preserved in thee, O Mother, for thou didst take up the Cross and follow Christ. By so doing, thou taughtest us to disregard the flesh for it passes away; but to care instead for the soul, for it is immortal. // Therefore thy spirit, O holy Mother Mary, rejoices with the angels.

#### **Tone 4 Kontakion (Resurrection)**

My Savior and Redeemer as God rose from the tomb and delivered the earth-born from their chains. He has shattered the gates of hell, and as Master, // He has risen on the third day!

#### **Tone 3 Kontakion (St. Mary of Egypt)**

Having been a sinful woman, thou becamest through repentance a bride of Christ. Having attained angelic life, thou didst defeat demons with the weapon of the Cross. // Therefore, O most glorious Mary, thou art a bride of the Kingdom.

#### **Tone 4 Prokeimenon (Resurrection)**

O Lord, how manifold are Thy works; / in wisdom hast Thou made them all. (Ps. 103:26)

V. Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord, my God, Thou art very great! (Ps. 103:1)

#### **Tone 4 Prokeimenon (St. Mary of Egypt)**

God is wonderful in His saints, / the God of Israel. (Ps. 67:35a)

#### **Tone 4**

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. Go forth, prosper and reign, for the sake of meekness, righteousness and truth! (Ps. 44:3b)

V. For Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity. (Ps. 44:6)

#### **Tone 1**

V. I waited patiently for the Lord; He attended to me and heard my supplication. (Ps. 39:1)

### **Holy Scripture:**

#### **Heb 9.11-14 (Epistle)**

Brethren, Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

#### **Gal 3.23-29 (Epistle—St Mary)**

Brethren, before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

#### **Mark 10.32-45 (Gospel)**

At that time, Jesus took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him: Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again. Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask." And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?" They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able." So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared. And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

#### **Luke 7.36-50 (Gospel—St Mary)**

At that time, one of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner." And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." So he said, "Teacher, say it." There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more? Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have rightly judged." Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little. Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." And those

who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?” Then He said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

### **Holy Services This Week:**

Wed. April 21st - Presanctified Liturgy -- 6pm (Missions Team mtg.)

Fri. April 23<sup>rd</sup> - Great Vespers – 6pm

Sat. April 24<sup>th</sup> – Lazarus Saturday Divine Liturgy – 9:30am

- Great Vespers with Blessing of the Palms – 4pm

### **Holy Actions:**

#### **Children’s Education: Last Day before Break**

#### **Catechesis of the Good Shepherd--**

--Atrium: (Jesse, Grace)

#### **Catechesis of the Good Gardener**

--Auricle: (Kyra, Olivia)

#### **Catechesis of the Good Carpenter**

--No Women’s Bible Study

--Mom’s Group – 2nd Friday – see calendar

--Parish Council Meeting – TODAY

### **Can Shame Ever Be Healthy?**

April 7, 2021 – Fr. Stephen Freeman

When I first began to research the topic of *shame*, I was surprised to find so little mention or use of the word in the Fathers. There are a few significant examples in which shame features largely, such as Book 4 in *The Ladder*. Nevertheless, the word seems somewhat scarce if you think about the profound nature of this experience and its place in the spiritual life. What became clear to me over time, however, is that the great body of writing and thought on the topic of shame is filed under “humility.” This itself is deeply instructive. Our popular culture tends to treat shame as a terrible problem, treating almost all shame as “toxic.” There is certainly a need for understanding toxic shame, and learning how to approach its healing. However, shame itself is not inherently toxic, and the popular writers who fail to make this distinction do a dis-service to their readers.

John Bradshaw, one of the earliest popular writers on shame, was careful to make this distinction and wrote in a very helpful manner on healthy shame in his bestseller, *Healing the Shame that Binds Us*. I have not seen this same clarity in some of the more recent popular treatments. This is unfortunate. Indeed, I have seen a number of cases in which people have been forced to retract writings on “healthy shame,” being told that “all shame is toxic,” and that speaking of “healthy shame” simply gives support for a diseased culture that has used shame to humiliate and control people. This an unfortunate artifact of the present distress in our culture. Ironically, it is a use of shame that prevents discussion of the topic.

One reason I find this lack of clarity to be unfortunate is its failure to actually understand or engage the neuro-physiology of our body’s shame response. We are hard-wired for a response (one of the nine identified neuro-biological affects) that is accurately described as “shame.” It is not a product of culture. It is universal, timeless, and biological. It can be compared to other affects such as the “surprise-startle” affect, or the “distress-anguish” affect, or the “interest-excitement” affect. The “mechanism” of the shame experience, whether toxic or healthy, is the same, differing only in its intensity and the issues that surround and embed themselves as complex, emotional triggers. For myself, I have found that understanding the mechanism and being able to make a distinction between toxic shame and healthy shame, has been essential in my own healing, as well as a help in understanding more accurately what is taking place in someone else’s life.

The tradition has this:

For there is a shame that leads to sin, and there is a shame that is glory and grace (ἔστιν γὰρ αἰσχὴν ἐπάγουσα ἁμαρτίαν, καὶ ἔστιν αἰσχὴν δόξα καὶ χάρις). Sirach 4:21

Toxic shame is the fruit of *abuse*. It is the manipulation of the shame response for dark purposes. It is a common result of violence and a primary tool in almost all efforts of control. Its wounds can continue for years, creating an emotional memory within an individual that is crippling, able to color the whole of a life experience. But it must be born in mind that toxic shame is the abuse of something natural, a misuse of our emotional responses. Shame itself is not the problem nor the enemy. Its abuse, which is properly termed, “toxic shame,” is not shame itself. The shame response, as well as healthy emotions attached to it, is a *necessary* part of our existence and serves a key role in the human life, including our spiritual life.

The tradition of the Church typically enshrines, not a received dogma, an *a priori* set of assumptions that demands our assent, but a deeply developed and nurtured reflection on human experience in the very depths of the soul. Above all else, the tradition preserves for us the fruit of *listening*. That listening can be seen in the many volumes of spiritual writings that describe the motions of the soul in its inmost actions and reactions. There is a whole psychology embedded in these writings, frequently with greater depth and insight than much of modern history’s various attempts. [Bishop Alexis Trader wrote a number of interesting works comparing modern psychology and the understanding of the *Philokalia* during his time as an Athonite monk]. This deeply experiential listening and its observations allows for subtle

distinctions, born of viewing what *actually* is the case, rather than what fits a truncated and distorted narrative.

Its healthy role often serves as a signal. It is a response that accompanies the interruption of an expected pleasure. It can be as innocent as “being caught off guard” or any experience that interrupts communion with others. We can experience this as mildly as embarrassment or an uncomfortable self-awareness. It is certainly possible for this to be an intense experience still without being toxic. It is an almost inherent aspect of our experiences of boundaries (cf. my upcoming webinar on that topic). Just as we are handicapped when we lose our sight, or hearing, so would we be handicapped were we to lose the ability to feel shame. Indeed, sociopaths and psychopaths seem to lack this ability. Narcissism is also bound up with disordered shame responses. It is important to have a normal, healthy experience of shame. As noted earlier, within the tradition, healthy shame is most often discussed in the context of humility. Indeed, humility can be defined as our *willingness to bear the truth of ourselves as God sees us*. Because this experience requires an extreme vulnerability, a nakedness akin to that of Adam and Eve, it necessarily triggers the shame response that is hard-wired into our bodies. To experience such vulnerability and *not* have a shame response would be unhealthy, even pathological. However, shame is shame, regardless of whether it is healthy or toxic. It is thus the case, that, if we are enmeshed in the after-effects of toxic shame, experiences of what would normally be healthy shame can and do trigger the frightful burden of toxicity. We become over-reactive, unable to bear what should normally be both bearable and healthy. As a result, there is most commonly a need for toxic shame to be addressed and healed in order for us to make the deep journey into the depths where healthy shame resides.

Clinical researchers have dubbed shame the “master emotion.” As we move from situation to situation (boundary to boundary), the shame response is unconsciously triggered and sets off the cascade of emotions that mark our day. Something as innocent as being cut-off in traffic or interrupted in a conversation (or ignored) can trigger any number of responses. However, the truth of our inner life is that it is often marred by *toxic* shame. Even experiences of mild, healthy, shame can trigger a storm of toxic shame when that is a dominant part of your inner world. This reality is made more complex by the fact that the experience of shame is so painful that it is generally morphed into other, less painful emotions (most commonly, anger or sadness), meaning that we live unaware that the pain of our life is actually rooted in shame. The result is a culture (and a Church) filled with people who are often clueless about the true nature of their inner life. That which is broken within us (or which functions in a broken manner) is often too toxic to touch. It colors our perception of the world around us, as well as our perception of ourselves and God. When this is translated into a growing culture of wounded anger, the result is predictably disastrous.

This stands in sharp contrast to the tradition. There, the road map for healing toxic shame is set forth in a path of supportive nurture and gentle truth-telling. Such a pastoral practice is, unfortunately, often not what is found. Parishes (as well as dioceses and whole jurisdictions) can themselves be as dominated by the demons unleashed in toxic situations. Anger, greed, and dysfunctional personalities can easily rise to the top and become a source of sin rather than a balm for wounded souls. Perhaps this has always been the case.

Nevertheless, there is a road map. Patience, gentleness, kindness, and supportive listening establish the basis for pastoral relationships in which shame, including its toxic forms, can slowly be healed. The acquisition of humility through the practice of “bearing a little shame,” can be fostered in the safety of a nurturing pastoral relationship. Often, much can be done in professional clinical situations as well. Shame is healed by being exposed to the light. Toxic shame consists of lies, abusive messages that tell us that “who we are” is wrong (ugly, incompetent, stupid, clumsy, worthless, etc.). The Church’s message of sinfulness is not a message of toxic shame. It does not tell us that we are worthless, etc., much less that we are evil. The gospel of Jesus Christ is that we are created in the image and likeness of God. Sin is not us ([you are not your sin](#)). Sin is “anti-us.” Sin is the contradiction of the truth of our being.

The good news is that this toxic burden can be lifted, forgiven, destroyed, and healed. It is in this process of forgiveness and healing that we encounter *healthy* shame. In the presence of God, we are revealed as creatures, the beloved offspring of His work. In His presence, the false images which we labor so hard to construct are allowed to fall away. Our failures and our successes pass into shadows. There is a form of emptiness that we find in that moment, while at the same time, discovering that God does not see us as worthless and sinful. Indeed, the truth and fullness of how He sees us is a mystery that exceeds description in its wonder.

Humility is learned by practice.

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! ... Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. I John 3:1-2

The journey to this vision does not come all at once. It is a battle. We wrestle against the toxic lies of the enemy (as well as our own and those of others). We struggle to accept the abiding and continual balm of the love of God that is poured into us from Liturgy to Liturgy. “Holy things are for the holy!” This movement in which the lies of toxic shame are banished by the purity of the face of Christ, and the truth of our being as children of God is affirmed, is the daily motion of salvation. This is not a declaration that we have no sin, but a proclamation that we *are not* sin. It is the declaration that we renounce the devil, all his works, and all his pride. It is the declaration that we accept Christ as King and God, together with His original word spoken at our creation: “It is very good.”