



Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

CROSSINGVILLE

Lord's Day 05-01-2022

**Christ is Risen!
Indeed He is Risen!**

ANTIPASCHA. 2nd SUNDAY OF PASCHA – Tone 1. St. Thomas Sunday. Prophet Jeremiah (6th c. B.C.). Ven. Paphnutius, Abbot of Boróvsk (1478). New Martyrs Euthymius (1814), Ignatius (1814), and Acacius (1816), of Mt. Athos. Hieromartyr Makáry (Macarius), Metropolitan of Kiev (1497). Martyr Bata the Persian (4th c.). Rt. Blv. Tamára, Queen of Georgia (13th c.). Ven. Niképhóros of Chios (1821). “Unexpected Joy” Icon of the Mother of God (1647).

HOLY HYMNS

Priest: “Blessed is the Kingdom...”

Choir: “Amen.”

Priest: “Christ is risen... “ (2 ½ times)

Choir: “and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!”

(The Divine Liturgy is begun in this manner until the Leavetaking of Pascha.)

Tone 7 Troparion (Pentecostarion)

From the sealed tomb, You shone forth, O Life!
Through closed doors You came to Your Disciples, O Christ God.
Renew in us, through them, an upright spirit,//
by the greatness of Your mercy, O Resurrection of all!

Tone 8 Kontakion (Pentecostarion)

Thomas touched Your life-giving side with an eager hand, O Christ God,
when You came to Your Apostles through closed doors.//
He cried out with all: “You are my Lord and my God!”

(The Trisagion is sung)

Tone 3 Prokeimenon (from the Pentecostarion)

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

V. Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God! (Ps. 146:1)

Tone 8

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

*V. Come, let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to God
our Savior! (Ps. 94:1)*

*V. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King over all the earth. (Ps.
94:3)*

(Instead of “It is truly meet...,” we sing:)

The Angel cried to the Lady, full of grace:
“Rejoice, O pure Virgin! Again, I say: Rejoice,
your Son is risen from His three days in the tomb!
With Himself He has raised all the dead.”
Rejoice, O ye people!

Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem!
The glory of the Lord has shone on you.
Exult now, and be glad, O Zion!
Be radiant, O pure Theotokos,
in the Resurrection of your Son!

HOLY SCRIPTURE

Acts 5:12-20 (Epistle)

And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders
were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in

Solomon’s Porch. Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the
people esteemed them highly. And believers were increasingly
added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they
brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and
couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on
some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding
cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were
tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed. Then the
high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the
sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, and
laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common
prison. But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors
and brought them out, and said, “Go, stand in the temple and
speak to the people all the words of this life.”

John 20:19-31 (Gospel)

*Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the
week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled,
for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to
them, “Peace be with you.” When He had said this, He showed them His
hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the
Lord. So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has
sent Me, I also send you.” And when He had said this, He breathed on
them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins
of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are
retained.”*

*Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with
them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, “We
have seen the Lord.” So he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the
print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put
my hand into His side, I will not believe.” And after eight days His
disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the
doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!”
Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My
hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be
unbelieving, but believing.” And Thomas answered and said to Him,
“My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have
seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and
yet have believed.”*

*And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His
disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that
you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that
believing you may have life in His name.*

HOLY WORDS

The Desert: the End Time Dwelling for the Church

*“These things I have spoken to you, in order that you should not be made to
stumble. They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, moreover there comes an hour that
everyone who kills you should think that he offers God a service” (Jn. 16:1-2).*

*The path of a true Christian can be nothing other than the Cross. The Lord asks
His disciples, James and John, when they sought passing glory (for they were still thinking
that Christ had come for the glory of the material nation of Israel), “Are you able to drink the
cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized” (Mk. 10:38)? The
Lord had already revealed the nature of His glory when he told them a few verses before, “We
are going to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be delivered up to the chief priests and to the
scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death and deliver Him up to the Gentiles. And they
shall mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit upon Him, and kill Him. And on the third day He
shall raise Himself” (Mk. 10:33-34).*

*In the epic prayer by St. Nikolai Velimirovich, the Akathist to Jesus Conqueror of
Death, he proclaims, “Let us turn to the Hero of all heroes and let us sing: Thou art the only
One worthy of glory and praise, O Conqueror of death. Thou didst declare death to death ... the
godless stood on the side of death, and as allies of death, rose up against Thee; all sat on the
wheel of death to weigh it down the more, to trample Thee in the dust, the same dust wherein
their ancestors and their camels, the hearts of their soldiers ... slept all alike. But Thou wast
not frightened being left in the dust and in solitude ... neither did Thy might become weary
from seeing even Thy friends by the side of the enemies. When the wheel of death drew near,
Thou didst take it with force and stop it; the earth shook and groaned from such an
unprecedented battle; the rocks split open from the unbearable pressure and oppression; the
sun lost its radiance, frightened by the unseen duel; and the very ones Thou didst desire to free
from death were continuously helping death press upon Thee: by piercing Thee, spitting on
Thee, buffeting Thee with stones and thorns. Who would have ever thought death had so many
friends on earth! And when Thou didst fall under the wheel in sweat, blood, and agony, nearly
defeated, all the allies of death rejoiced over Thy defeat, O undefeatable One. But Thou didst
fall, O Mighty One, only so that Thou would the better capture the fatal wheel and break it. For
three days Thou didst hold it fast, and on the third day Thou didst smash it to pieces; Thou
didst arise into the heavens, standing on the ruins of the wheel of death, to the joy and shame
of the people, O Life-giving Conqueror” (Ikos Six).*

*St. Nikolai full of the Holy Spirit resounds with the same message that the great
Apostle Paul proclaimed in the early days of the Church, “For it is needful for this corruptible
to put on itself incorruption and this mortal to put on itself immortality. But whenever this
corruption should put on itself incorruption, and this mortal should put on itself immortality,
then the word which has been written shall come to pass: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory. O
death, where is thy sting? O Hades, where is thy victory?’ Now the sting of death is sin, and the
power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus
Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, keep on becoming firm, immovable, always abounding
in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not empty in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:54-58).
Should it then astonish us that the enemies of Truth are attempting to crush the followers of
Jesus Christ with the same wheel of death? (A wheel that is ultimately destroyed!) We see this*

wheel in our world, in Ukraine as the canonical Church (under Met. Onuphry) is persecuted; in Kosovo where the same is taking place. In many places throughout the Middle East, Orthodox are also suffering. We see it in more subtle forms in the wheel of Ecumenism that is seeking to eradicate the fullness of Truth in Christ Jesus alone. We see it in the humanistic world order that seeks to emasculate True Christianity and impose upon it a new "moral" outlook. We see it in government forces that seek to subject the holy things of Christ to the things of this fallen world; to convince Christians of their own will to exchange the mind of Christ for the mind of this fallen world. On this list could go, but an Elder of our times, Athanasios (Mitilinaios), sums it up in this manner, "Accordingly, all heretical anti-Christian and godless systems are directed towards drowning (i.e. destroying) the Church. I hope you see this, especially in our time when there is such a plethora of these godless belief systems that often make one wonder; my God, what is going on" (Revelation, the Seven Trumpets & the Antichrist, Vol. III. Zoe Press. pg. 228)?

Today, we may say with St. Nikolai, *Who would have ever thought death had so many friends on earth!* Even those who outwardly claim to be friends of Christ! Yet did our Lord not say, "The cup indeed that I drink, you shall drink, and the baptism with which I am baptized, you shall be baptized" (Mk. 10:39)? The whole existence of Christ's Body – the Church – on earth has been the existence of being baptized in her Lord's Baptism and the drinking of His Cup. Elder Athanasios preaches, "The suffering, which would belong to Christ, now belongs to the Church. The Church suffers as the Body of Christ" (Revelation, the Seven Trumpets & the Antichrist, Vol. III. pg. 222). As the enemies of Christ sought to destroy Him when He came in the flesh – the unique incarnation through the Virgin Mary – so, to this day they seek to destroy His continued incarnation through His Body the Church.

"And when the dragon saw that he was cast to the earth, he persecuted the Women who brought forth the male. And to the Woman were given two wings of the eagle, the great one, in order that she may fly into the wilderness, into her place, there where she is being nourished... and the dragon was wrath against the Woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her seed, those keeping the commandments of God and having the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. 12:13-14,17).

Since a Christian becomes a member of Christ's Body, he also becomes an enemy of the devil. Thus, as the devil sought to inspire the destruction of Christ Jesus (as if possible!), to this day he continues to inspire those who are blinded by darkness and sin to war against Christ in His Church. "In his (the devil's) frustration he has turned against the Church because She was and has been standing before, or opposite, him; thus, the pursuit begins – the merciless and cruel persecution of the Church – from the time of Her establishment until the end of history" (Revelation, the Seven Trumpets & the Antichrist, pg. 221). Elder Athanasios instructs us with these sober words, "The cross is before us; the sufferings continue in the flesh. This is the mystical life of the Christian. Thus, we see that until the very end of the age, the faithful will shoulder the afflictions and sufferings of Christ, because the devil, in his anger, will always inflict suffering on the Church until the end of history" (Ibid, pg. 222). The mystical life of a Christian cannot be other than a participation in the baptism and cup of the Lord.

And so, when a Christian seeks to actively compromise with the fallen system of the world so to acquire a seeming peace, we may know by this fruit that such a one is already wandering from the way of Christ. It should also not surprise us when some seek to use constructs and aspects of "church" to promote an antichrist spirit. When some actively seek to harmonize the Church with the spirit of the world, then we may know for certain that they are promoting something contrary to the Church in Her truth.

When we see the Church being crucified as was her Lord, then we know she is standing in Truth. As with her Lord, many a time, she is crucified with very few remaining by her side. Many a time, the majority are with the masses crying out "crucify, crucify!" And she, in one spirit with her Lord, longs to free from death the very ones who are pressing death upon her.

Thus, the true dwelling place of the Church is in the desert. There she is free in her Lord Jesus. "The desert or the wilderness is characterized as the native of true place of the Church. The wilderness, which is Her native place, is the place best suited for Her. The wilderness will be the permanent place of the Church and Her inheritance, since Her persecution in the world will always be an endless fact" (Ibid, pg. 223), teaches Elder Athanasios.

The desert is the only true dwelling place on earth for the Church, for there she comprehends that she has no abiding city, "Let us be going forth therefore to Him outside of the encampment, bearing His reproach; for we have no abiding city here, but we are seeking the coming one" (Heb. 13:13-14). St. John Chrysostom exclaims, "He was crucified outside as one condemned; neither let us be ashamed to be going forth out of the world" (Orthodox New Testament, Vol. II. Buena Vista, pg. 433). Archbp. Dimitry (Royster) of blessed memory echoes this truth when he comments, "All those who believe in Jesus Christ and follow Him faithfully must also realize that they must willingly become outcasts as far as the world is concerned" (The Epistle to the Hebrews, a Commentary. SVS Press. pg. 237).

Thus, as Christians, we should resist temptations to seek an earthly kingdom as a supporter and deliverer of the Church. Undeniably, the Church has cooperated with earthly kingdoms when possible and there is a positive place for this. Yet, ultimately the Church's abode on earth is not with a kingdom of this world (as positive as it is or may have been). Her abiding place is outside of the city (of this world), in the desert where she seeks earnestly the coming eternal Kingdom of her Lord Jesus Christ. As St. Paul testifies, "The Jerusalem above is free, which is Mother of us all" (Gal. 4:26). Archbp. Dimity has this insight, "The city out of which He and those who unite themselves to Him have been cast out has become a symbol of this world or 'this worldism,' and its impermanence, because of its rejection of Him. Both the religious and political worlds combined to reject Him, the Jews and the Romans. The city that is to come that is sought by Christians is the same that was the destination of Abraham (see Heb. 11:10), the destination that has been revealed and realized by the Mediator of the New Covenant, Christ (see Heb 12:22). St. Paul reminds Christians of their true home or fatherland, when he says 'our community [politivma, 'state' or 'commonwealth'] is in heaven' (Phil. 3:20)" (The Epistle to the Hebrews, a Commentary. pg. 238).

For this reason, the multitude of early martyrs answered the questions of the Roman interrogators - What is your name? With - I am a Christian. Where are you from? - I am a Christian. What is your profession? - I am a Christian. What is your family lineage? - I am a Christian.

True Christians have always understood that their home is the Church, which is the Body of Christ, which is His Kingdom, which will be revealed in its full glory at the end of the age in the Second Coming. Elder Athanasios gives us a needed reminder of what the Church is, "The Church is not the bishop; the bishop is of the Church. The Church is not the priests; the priests are of the Church. The Church is not the temple or buildings; the temples are of the Church. The Church is the Body of Christ; and each person who partakes of the Body and Blood of Christ is thus embodied in the Body of Christ" (Revelation, the Seven Trumpets & the Antichrist, pg. 232).

We must beg the Lord for His grace to energize in our own person the true attributes of His followers. For we, as His people, must be conformed to the Image of our Lord, and we must be baptized in His baptism, and we must drink of His cup; we must walk to Him outside the city. We are reminded even by the Elder Athanasios to be on guard against false forms of Christianity – those that prefer to dwell in the "city" – which will in reality only be manifestations of the spirit of this age, "My friends, as it is necessary to reinforce the position – that we have repeatedly brought to your attention – about the utopia of a social and political Christianity. I will repeat: Christianity cannot become a social system or an ethno-cultural political system. The Church seeks refuge in the desert. In the final days, the desert will literally become Her home. The Church will flee to the desert, which is precisely what the word of God says here in Revelation" (Ibid, pg. 223).

In the desert, mortality is transformed into immortality, corruption into incorruption. There in the tomb of the desert, hated by the spirit of this fallen age, the Church is victorious, she shall be nourished on the death and resurrection of her Lord and

Bridegroom; moreover, the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus energizes in her in all power and truth. And if we are to have it energizing within us, then we must set our hearts to following our Mother into the wilderness. "Therefore, we were buried with Him by the baptism into the death, that even as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, thus also we should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, certainly also we shall be of the resurrection" (Rom. 6:4-5). This is, as St. Paul proclaimed earlier, the grace that makes of a Christian a person who is firm and unmovable, for he is one who is an active partaker in the work of the Lord.

It seems that it may be very true that as the Church was born in the desert – into persecution and active rejection by the worldly state power of Rome; so in these days the Church is once again given no earthly hope (as was manifested at times in certain Christian kingdoms of this earth). In the desert, being pursued by the dragon, the Church's (and thus our) only hope is in the Heavenly King – Jesus Christ.

My brothers and sisters, let us hold to the glory of our Lord, ever shining forth in His faithful Bride, the Church. And let us set our will upon our sojourn in the desert.

Parish Services and Activities

(For Calendar changes see website)

www.orthodoxcrossingville.org

TODAY –Divine Liturgy – Procession to the Parish Cemetery

Coffee Hour – Missions Team Meeting – No Atriums today

Wed. May 4th – Daily Vespers – St. Irene – 6pm

Sat. May 7th – St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Chanting/Readers/Altar Servers Class 2:00pm-4pm

Sat. May 14th – Men's Fellowship - 9-12noon

Sun. May 15th – Parish Council

Thur. May 19th – Baptism of Ophelia Lynch – 11am

ANNOUNCEMENTS

+Parish Rummage-Bake Sale/Carwash – Fri. May 27th - 3-7pm – Sat. 28th – 9-4pm (Car wash day)

All proceeds benefit children for Camp

+Items are still being collected+

***Church Cleaning Sign-up is in the Vestibule please take time to serve and keep our parish clean.

Pray with out ceasing...

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

newly Illuminated Matthew(Moses), Katherine(Isadora), Abigail(Lydia), Karis(Felicity), Josiah(Luka), Bethany(Theodulia), Brenda(Brenndan), Fr. Andrew, Fr. David, Fr. Joseph, Fr. Zachariah, Iguman Patrick, Hieromonk Herman, Fr. Dusan, Fr. Christopher, Prez. Alexandria, Mat. Gail, Mat. Donna, Mat. Pirsilla, Mat. Trudi, Judy, Ophilea, John, Boris, Tamara, Susan, Mary B. Margret, Bill S., John S., Nickolas, Timothy, Preston, Olivia, Jesse, Grace, Delani, Jeremiah, Sandy, William, Steve A., Patricia, Anna, Sally, Noah, Annisatita, Paul, Irenia, Damen

The Homebound Mary G, Theodore

Catechumen/Inquirers- David, Hannah & Family...

Special requests... Paul, Gilbert, Joanne, Phyllis, Anthony, Paul, James, Sean, Liam, Kim, Loren, Janet, Lynn, Helen, Dan, Nicholas, Maya, Mia, Charles, Gregory, Donna, Laura, Laken, Bob, Gary, Bill, Stevie, Kristen, Paul, Cletus (Add your own requests here)...

Departed : newly departed James and Valentina, Proto-deacon Michael, Priest Anastasy, Marie, Vincent, Richard