

see the existence of others. We become like a movie audience in which all of the real people sit in the dark, unaware of one another, with the digital images dancing on the screen as the center of our short-term world.

Fr. Thomas Hopko, in his famous 55 maxims, mentions several times the need “to be small,” or, words to that effect. I would modify that somewhat by saying, “Learn to be content.” In our drive for excellence or constant improvement, we never learn the skills of being content with anything. I have known people who were very set on a career ladder and had no idea what to do when they reached the top. They learned everything other than how to live.

St. Paul uses the term *contentment* as a normative goal of the spiritual life:

Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. (1 Tim. 6:5-10)

Contentment (ἀνταρκεία) has the meaning “having a sufficiency within yourself.” Elsewhere, St. Paul speaks of his own experience: *...for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. (Phil. 4:11-12)*

Contentment allows us to remain attentive to where we are (and who we are). The drive of our culture always distracts us and focuses our attention to where we are not and to where we want to be. It creates an anxiety and makes our present life a distraction. The present is a marvelous place. It is also the place of the heart.

The heart itself is but a small vessel, yet dragons are there, and there are also lions; there are poisonous beasts and all the treasures of evil. But there too is God, the angels, the life and the kingdom, the light and the apostles, the heavenly cities and the treasuries of grace – all things are there. St. Macarius (H.43.7)

With that, we should be content.

UPCOMING SERVICES AND EVENTS

No Church School today – Church School will resume in Sept.

Mon. June 4th – Beginning of the Apostles Fast

Wed. June 6th Daily Vespers – 6pm

Sat. June 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th – Breakfast Buffet from 9am-1pm

Sun. June 10th – Missions Team Coffee Hour

Mon.-Tues. Good Shepherd Church School Training – held at Holy Assumption on Canton Ohio

Wed. June 13th, 6pm - Parish Council Meeting

Sun. June 17th – Fr. Joseph Gall and family will be celebrating the Liturgy

Thurs. June 28th – Great Vespers for Sts. Peter and Paul

Fri. June 29th – Patronal Feast Day Divine Liturgy – 9:30
- **Service of Anointing – 2pm**
- **Parish Picnic 4-8pm**

Sun. July 2nd – Panahidka for Nickoli Emelianow following Liturgy – luncheon to follow

Sunday, July 15th – Chicken BBQ – 12noon -3pm

July 22-27th –All American Council- St. Louis, MO

July 22-28th – Camp Nazareth

MISSIONS TEAM

~ During the Month of June the team will be collecting items for IOCC kits for children. Items to be collected will be announced.

~Next Meeting to be held on Sunday June 10th^d following Coffee Hour

Fr. Daniel will be on Vacation from June 16-25th and July 4-14th Please contact Fr. David Smoley during this time for any pastoral needs you may have. holysmoley@roadrunner.com 814-823-4707

Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

25636 N. Mosiertown Rd Crossingville, PA 1641

Rev. Fr. Daniel Mathewson – *Rector*

V. Rev. David Smoley – *Retired*

Lord’s Day – June 3rd, 2018 Parish phone: 814-734-3801 Find us on the Web at: www.orthodoxcrossingville.org or on Face book: Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church Crossingville

GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!

1st SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 8. All Saints. Martyr Lucillian and those who suffered with him at Byzantium: four youths—Claudius, Hypatius, Paul, and Dionysius; and the Virgin Paula (270-275). Hieromartyr Lucian—Bishop, Maximian—Presbyter, Julian—Deacon, Marcellinus and Saturninus, at Beauvais in France (81-96).

PLEASE INCLUDE THESE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN YOUR DAILY PRAYERS: Those in need –Fr. Andrew, Fr. David, Mat. Gail, Mat. Donna, Mat. Pirsilla, Pearl, William, Karen, John, Mary, Stavros, Marilyn, Theona, Ann, Timothy, Jeremiah, Delani, The Homebound..., Tanya, Richard, Helen, , Irene, Ruth, Josephine, William, Claudia... Travelers... Catechumens –Christian ...Our Missionaries Abroad...Fr. David and Mt. Rozanne, Military servers...Greg ...Departed Orthodox...Newly Departed – Catherine Kirzmanich John Bicko, John Sekel, 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, Zera Kim....

Today’s Hymns 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 4 Troparion (*from the Pentecostarion*)

As with fine porphyry and royal purple,
Thy Church has been adorned with Thy martyrs’ blood shed throughout all the world.
She cries to Thee, O Christ God:
“Send down Thy bounties on Thy people,//
grant peace to Thy habitation and great mercy to our souls!”

Tone 8 Kontakion (from the Pentecostarion)

The universe offers Thee the God-bearing Martyrs as the first fruits of creation, O Lord and Creator. By their prayers keep Thy Church, Thy habitation, in abiding peace// through the Theotokos, O most Merciful One!

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 4 Prokeimenon (Saints)

God is wonderful in His saints, the God of Israel. (Ps 67/68:35)

Epistle

Hebrews 11:33-12:2

**Tone 4
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!**

v. The righteous cried and the Lord heard them and delivered them out of all their troubles. (Ps 33/34:18)

v. Many are the afflictions of the righteous; the Lord will deliver them out of them all. (Ps 33/34:20)

Gospel

Today's Scripture Readings:

Hebrews 11:33-12:2 (Epistle)

(W)ho through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented – of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise,

God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Matthew 10:32-33, 37-38, 19:27-30 (Gospel)

Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. Then Peter answered and said to Him, “See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?” So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

The Goal of a Lesser Life

From my earliest childhood, I always heard the future spoken of in superlatives: the best, the best possible, etc. There was an unspoken assumption that each human being was *uniquely* suited to something and that if they found that unique thing and worked at it, they could become the best at something. Some of my early successes revolved around the piano. With a bit of work, I was able to excel beyond my older brother (five years my senior). I kept up with other students of my teacher, though I noticed that I was not always on top. And then, I started Junior High.

There, in my homeroom, was a Jewish kid (the first I had ever met). Sometime during the year, he had the opportunity to play the piano for us. We were thirteen, and this scrawny guy sat down and ripped out a Rachmaninov prelude with ease. I had never seen (for real) anyone play like that. I also knew that I would *never* play like that. Perhaps he had found his *unique thing*.

As my world continued towards adulthood, and widened its scope of contacts, I learned repeatedly, that I was not the sharpest knife in the drawer. Though I had a bit of talent at one thing and another, I was pretty much above average, at best. The illusion of “uniquely suited” turned out to be a pep talk, but not the truth of our existence.

We live in the culture of the pep-talk, whether it is directed towards us or not. Watching the next amazing teen on “America’s Got Talent” can be astounding entertainment, but also a reminder that most of us are not like that. Our mediocrity would make bad TV. Excellence is largely a myth and a painful one for many. It is also a distraction from what is truly excellent about everyone and everything.

The modern cult of excellence is largely defined by our consumer economy. Excellence *sells*. There is always a message that if we found our unique thing it would have a unique place in the market. We would be productive, people would pay for it, like us, and we would be happy. This is largely untrue. Most people discover that no matter their gift or talent, that thing they do, over and over, is *work*. Sometimes we like our work, and sometimes we don’t. A Picasso can finish a painting and consider it garbage, even discarding it. A Picasso in the trash!

While excellence is great and beauty is a cause for wonder, we do not rightly live as part of a marketing strategy. Within the market, we are almost all reduced to audience, ticket-buyers, shills for the card-sharps. It is not a wise way to live a life.

I have imagined a normal day in a life, filmed in high-definition, carefully edited and produced with a breathless narration by Sir David Attenborough. As amusing as it might sound, the things that make up the content of *The Blue Planet* and other such creations are as mundane as a normal day in the life of an octopus. However, the film work manages to pay attention in patient wonder at what would normally pass unnoticed.

Our lives are driven by false assumptions in which we become our own greatest disappointments, all the while wondering at the excellence of others. In truth, our lives lack true wonder. We do not attend to the things that are most directly at hand. That which is *uniquely* proper to each of us is not our marketable skill – it is our very existence! That we do not rightly see our own existence means that we fail to rightly