

Saints Peter and Paul

Orthodox Church

25636 N. Mosiertown Rd Crossingville, PA 1641

Archpriest Fr. Daniel Mathewson – *Rector*

V. Rev. David Smoley – *Retired* **Lord's Day – 7-21-2019**

Parish phone: 814-734-3801

Find us on the Web at:

www.orthodoxcrossingville.org



GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!

5th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST —

Tone 4. Prophet Ezekiel (6th c. B.C.). Ven.

Simeon of Emessa, Fool-for-Christ, and his fellow ascetic, Ven. John (ca. 590). Ven. Onuphry (Onuphrius) the Silent, and Ven. Onisim, Recluse, of the Kiev Caves (Far Caves—12th-13th c.). The “ARMATIA” Icon of the Most-holy Theotokos.

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

Samuel, Fr. Andrew, Fr. David, Fr. Anthony, Mat. Gail, Mat. Donna, Mat. Pirsilla, Anna, Weston, Eliza, Valerie, Paul, Pearl, William, Joseph, Terry, Rich, Karen, John, Stavros, Nickolas, Timothy, Judy, James, Amanda, Damian, Delani, Jeremiah, Mary, Christine, Timothy, Andrew, Kati, Simeon, Debbie, Christopher The Homebound... Ann, Tanya, Richard, Ruth, William, Claudia Catechumens- Christian ... Travelers ... Military servers... Greg ... Newly Departed – Theona Sekel, Helen Miller, Anna Anderson, Rodney Senyo, Josephine Olnik, Marilyn Filipos, Irene Hoovler... Departed Orthodox Jeff, Catherine, John B., John S., Nickoli, Ann, Katherine, Vernon, Paul, James, Andrew, Peter, Paul, Margaret, Michael Mary Ann, Timothy... Special requests... Gilbert, Joanne, Richard, Jeniene, Anthony, Ian, Paul, Daleen, James, Sean, Liam, Bill, Wesley, Zera, Kim, Jim, Margaret, Loren, Nick, Russell, Julia, Shelby, Janet, Mareen, Lynn, Jarrod, Zach, Rod.

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 4 Troparion (for Saints Simeon and John)

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

Tone 2 Troparion (Prophet Ezekiel)

We celebrate the memory of Thy Prophet Ezekiel, O Lord; through him, we beseech Thee: // save our souls!

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 2 Kontakion (for Saints Simeon and John)

Let us praise the venerable Simeon as an equal to the angels,

for he walked in the flesh upon the earth as a bodiless angel shining forth to all as an example of the virtues; and with him let us honor his companion, the ever memorable and God-bearing father John, // for they ceaselessly pray to the Lord for us with faith and love!

Tone 4 Kontakion (Prophet Ezekiel)

Thou hast been revealed as a Prophet of God, wondrous Ezekiel, proclaiming to all the incarnation of the Lord, the Lamb and Creator, // the Son of God, Who has ever revealed Himself.

Tone 4 Prokeimenon

O Lord, how manifold are Thy works; in wisdom hast Thou made them all. (Ps 103/104:24)

v: Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord, my God, Thou art very great! (Ps 103/104:1)

Tone 4

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

v: Go forth, prosper and reign, for the sake of meekness, righteousness and truth! (Ps 44/45:5)

v: For Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity. (Ps 44/45:8)

HOLY SCRIPTURE:

Romans 10:1-10 (Epistle)

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, “The man who does those things shall live by them.” But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Matthew 8:28-9:1 (Gospel)

When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. And suddenly they cried out, saying, “What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?” Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding. So the demons begged Him, saying, “If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine.” And He said to them, “Go.” So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water. Then those who kept them fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged Him to depart from their region. So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city.

Holy Actions:

+Missions Team is planning a Trip to Alaska for Summer 2020, contact Anna R. or Debbie K. if you are interested in attending.

+TODAY in Honor of St Elijah the prophet Fr. Daniel will be blessing cars and vehicles following the Divine Liturgy.

SUMMER SCHEDULE

Wed. July 24th Akathist to the Passion bearers – 6pm

Wed. July 31st - Great Vespers for The Procession of the Holy Cross/ blessing of waters -7pm (Beginning of the Dormition Fast 1st - 14th)

Thur. Aug. 1st - Divine Liturgy - 9:30am

Holy Transfiguration

Mon. Aug. 5th - Great Vespers 7pm

Tue. Aug. 6th - Pilgrimage to Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Elwood City, Penn. 9:30 am Liturgy

Holy Dormition of the Theotokos

Wed. Aug. 14th - Great Vespers+Akathist to the Theotokos - 7pm

Thurs. Aug. 15th - Divine Liturgy - 9:30am

Sun. Sept. 22nd – Beginning of our Church School

Harvest Festival – Sat. October 19th

HOLY WORDS:

The Struggle Against the Normal Life

Within the Christianity of our time, the great spiritual conflict, unknown to almost all, is between a naturalistic/secular world of modernity and the sacramental world of classical Christianity. The first presumes that a literal take on the world is the most accurate. It tends to assume a closed system of cause and effect, ultimately explainable through science and manageable through technology. Modern Christians, quite innocently, accept this account of the world with the *proviso* that there is also a God who, on occasion, intervenes within this closed order. The naturalist unbeliever says, “Prove it.” The sacramental world of classical Christianity speaks a wholly different language. It presumes that the world as we see it is an expression of a greater reality that is unseen. It presumes that everything is a continuing gift and a means of communion with the good God who created it. The meaning and purpose of things is found in that which is not seen, apart from which we can only reach false conclusions. The essential message of Christ, “The Kingdom of God is at hand,” is a proclamation of the primacy of this unseen world and its coming reign in the restoration of all things (*apokatastasis*, cf. Acts 3:21).

The assumptions of these two worldviews could hardly be more contradictory. The naturalistic/secular model has the advantage of sharing a worldview with contemporary culture. As such, it forms part of what most people would perceive as “common sense” and “normal.” Indeed, the larger portion of Christian believers within that model have no idea that any other Christian worldview exists. The classical/sacramental worldview was the only Christian worldview for most of the centuries prior to the Reformation. Even then, that worldview was only displaced through revolution and state sponsorship. Nonetheless, the sacramental understanding continues within the life of the Orthodox Church, as well as many segments of Catholicism. Its abiding presence in the Scriptures guarantees that at least a suspicion of “something else” will haunt some modern Christian minds.

An assumption of the secular/naturalist worldview is that information itself is “objective” in character: it is equally accessible to everyone. The classical worldview assumes something quite different. “Blessed are the pure in heart,” Christ says, “for they shall see God.” The Kingdom of God is not an inert object that yields itself to public examination. The knowledge of God and of all spiritual things requires a different mode of seeing and understanding. St. Paul says it this way:

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (1Co 2:14)

This understanding disturbs the sensibilities of many contemporary Christians. Some go so far as to suggest that it is “gnostic” (by this they mean that the very notion of spiritual knowledge that is less than democratic is suspect). *Sola Scriptura* is a modern concept that posits the Scriptures as subject to objective interpretation. The Scriptures thus belong to the world of public, democratic debate, whose meaning belongs within the marketplace of opinion. The Scriptures are “my Bible.”

The classical model is, in fact, the teaching found in the Scriptures. It utterly rejects the notion of spiritual knowledge belonging to the same category as the naturalistic/secular world. It clearly understands that the truth of things is perceived only through the heart (*nous*) and that an inward change is required. It is impossible to encounter the truth and remain unchanged.

The classical model, particularly as found within Orthodoxy, demands repentance and asceticism as a normative part of the spiritual life. These actions do not earn a reward, but are an inherent part of the cleansing of the heart and the possibility of perceiving the truth.

The rationalization (secular/rationalist) of the gospel has also given rise to modern “evangelism.” If no particular change is required in a human being in order to perceive the truth of the gospel, then rational argument and demonstration becomes the order of the day. Indeed, modern evangelism is largely indistinguishable from modern marketing. They were born from the same American social movements.

The classical model tends to be slower in its communication, for what is being transmitted is the fullness of the tradition and the transformation of each human life. Evangelism, in this context, has little to no relationship with marketing. The primary form for the transmission of the gospel is the community of the Church. The Christian faith, in its fullness, is properly only seen in an embodied community of believers living in sacramental union with God through Christ by the Holy Spirit. In the early Church, the catechumenate generally lasted for as much as three years. The formation that took place was seen as an essential preparation for the Christian life. “Making a decision” was almost beside the point. The struggle between classical/sacramental Christianity and modernity (including its various Christianities) is not a battle over information. The heart of the struggle is for sacramental Christianity to simply remain faithful to what it is. That struggle is significant, simply for the fact that it takes place within a dominant culture that is largely its antithesis.

A complicating factor in this struggle is the fact that the dominant culture (naturalistic/secular) has taken up traditional Christian vocabulary and changed its meaning. This creates a situation in which classical Christianity is in constant need of defining and understanding its own language in contradistinction to the prevailing cultural mind. The most simple terms, “faith, belief, Baptism, Communion, icon, forgiveness, sin, repentance,” are among those things that have to be consistently re-defined. Every conversation outside a certain circle requires this effort, and, even within that circle, things are not always easy.

Such an effort might seem exhausting. The only position of relaxation within the culture is the effortless agreement with what the prevailing permutations tell us on any given day. Human instinct tends towards the effortless life – and the secular mentality constantly reassures us that only the effortless life is normal. Indeed, “normal, ordinary, common,” and such terms, are all words invented by modernity as a self-description. Such concepts are utterly absent from the world of Scripture. Oddly, no one lived a “normal” life until relatively recently.

That which is “normal” is nothing of the sort. It is the purblind self-assurance that all is well when nothing is well.

God have mercy on us.

By Fr. Stephen Freeman