

It is in this need to be rightly seen that the nature of our relationship with God becomes clear. Unlike the many things and people around us, God has no interest in absorbing us. Indeed, His relationship with us is utterly opposed to absorption. He means to establish us as His *equals* (yes, I know that sounds shocking).

“Face to face” is an impossible encounter between two non-equals. That one is greater than the other precludes the ability of the lesser to see them properly. The direction of the Incarnation is God’s own movement making possible our meeting with Him face-to-face. It is echoed in this remarkable verse:

For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brethren, (Heb. 2:11)

Christ elevates the disciples to this position when He says: No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. (Jn. 15:15) We also hear it spoken eschatologically in the extreme saying from Revelation:

He who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. (Rev. 3:21)

This is the condescension of God in His love for man!

This meeting as equals also means the respect of *boundaries*: there is *communion* but no *absorption*. The primary aspect of our personal boundary is *freedom*. There can be no coercion in the communion of persons, only love. What is given to us in beholding the face of God is purely the gift of God. What we return to Him can only be the same. A gift can only proceed from freedom.

Sadly, our fascination with our own face is not truly an act of love. We don’t actually *like* our face. Our many selfies represent just so many efforts “to pose.” Like the sound of our voice, we often wince at the first glimpse of ourselves. We never look quite like we imagine. Make-up and lighting help, but they represent our constant drive to change how we appear. Indeed, the discomfort we feel with details of our own face are symptoms of shame. The primary physical elements of shame are experienced in the face. Blood rushes to the face, our eyes look down, and, most often, we turn our faces away. Shame hides.

To behold God face-to-face necessarily means that we behold Him without shame. Thus, this experience holds within it the promise of complete forgiveness and healing from the damage of sin. The icons of saints are normatively painted full face (except when turned slightly towards the figure of Christ in prayer). Their faces, like that of Christ, bear witness to their glorification. They look towards us in the gift of pure freedom with friendship and love. It is an invitation to unite with them in their face-to-face encounter with Christ. It establishes and completes them as persons. It is for this same reason that they are not only depicted in full face but are always identified

with their names written on the icon. It betokens that they have fully become who they were created to be.

#### UPCOMING SERVICES AND EVENTS

#### **Ladies Altar Society Meeting Today following Coffee Hour**

#### **July 22-27<sup>th</sup> –All American Council- St. Louis, MO**

**\*Fr. Daniel , Mat. Gail and Olivia Mathewson leave today. Matushka Gail will be the delegate and Olivia FOCA Jr. Councilor for the youth event. Please pray for their safe travels!**

#### **August 6<sup>th</sup> – Pilgrimage to the Holy Transfiguration Monastery.**

#### MISSIONS TEAM

**~~ During the Month of July the team will be collecting items for “Emergency Care Bags” for victims of human trafficking. Items are listed on the Missions Team BB in the hall. See Anna R.**

#### PARISH COUNCIL

- Autumn Bicko gave a presentation on our new Sunday education program for children. The Children will be using the front room in the hall for the fall.
- A Parish design committee is forming to make recommendations to the Council on our flooring for the parish temple.
- Our Chicken BBQ Dinner was a great success as usual, thank you to all who helped and served. \$3489.00 was our intake.

#### Parish NEWS

- Many Years to Joseph and Elizabeth Wallace on the birth of their new daughter Charlotte Kaye born on July 17<sup>th</sup>. Please keep mom and baby in your prayers as they recover.
- Many years to Nathan and Kyra Mathewson united in Orthodox Marriage on July 8<sup>th</sup> – their new address; 3071 PA Rt 6 Highway Linesville, PA 16424
- Dormition Fast begins on August 1st

# 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 – July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 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 Crossingville

**Glory to Jesus Christ!**

**Glory Forever!**

**8th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 7. Holy Myrrhbearer and Equal-to-the-Apostles Mary Magdalene (1st c.). Translation of the Relics of Hieromartyr Phocas, Bishop of Sinope (403-404). Repose of Ven. Cornelius of Pereyaslav’ (1693). Martyr Markella of Chios (14th c.).**

**PLEASE INCLUDE THESE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN YOUR DAILY PRAYERS: Those in need –Fr. Andrew, Fr. David, Mat. Gail, Mat. Donna, Mat. Pirsilla, Theresa, Pearl, William, Karen, John, Mary, Stavros, Marilyn, Theona, Ann, Timothy, , Delani, Jeremiah, Nathan and Kyra The Homebound...Elizabeth, Charlotte, Tanya, Richard, Helen, Irene, Ruth, Josephine, William, Claudia... Travelers. ...Catechumens –Christian ...Our Missionaries Abroad...Fr. David and Mt. Rozanne, Military servers...Greg ...Departed Orthodox Nickoli Emelianow Proto Dcn. Gregory Hatrak Maria Proch, Samuel Kanuik ...Newly Departed – Maria Proch, 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, Jim, ....**

**Today’s Hymns Tone 7 Troparion (*Resurrection*)**

**By Thy Cross Thou didst destroy death.  
To the thief Thou didst open Paradise.  
For the Myrrhbearers Thou didst change weeping into joy,  
and Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God,  
to proclaim that Thou art risen,//  
granting the world great mercy.**

**Tone 1 Troparion (*Mary Magdalene*)**

By **keeping** His commandments and laws, holy Mary **Magdalene**, thou didst follow Christ, Who for our sake was born of the **Virgin**, and in **celebrating** thy most holy **memory** today, // we receive forgiveness of **sins** by thy prayers.

**Tone 4 Troparion (Hieromartyr Phocas)**  
By sharing in the ways of the **Apostles**, thou didst become a **successor** to their throne. Through the practice of virtue, thou didst find the way to **divine contemplation**, O **inspired** one of God; by teaching the word of Truth without error, thou didst defend the **Faith**, even to the **shedding** of thy blood. // **Hieromartyr Phocas**, entreat Christ God to **save** our souls!

**Tone 7 Kontakion (Resurrection)**  
The **dominion** of death can no longer hold men **captive**, for Christ descended, shattering and destroying its **powers**. Hell is **bound**, while the **Prophets rejoice** and cry: “The Savior has come to **those** in faith; // enter, you **faithful**, into the **Resurrection!**”

**Tone 3\* Kontakion (Mary Magdalene)**  
Standing before the Cross of the **Savior**, suffering with the **Mother** of the Lord, the most **glorious** Mary **Magdalene** didst offer **praise** with tears. She cried out: “What is this strange **wonder**? He Who **holds** the whole creation in His hand chooses to **suffer**. // **Glory** to Thy **power**, O Lord!”

**Tone 2 Kontakion (Hieromartyr Phocas)**  
The **Master** established thee as a **brilliant** sun, shining on all the **faithful**, glorious O **hieromartyr Phocas**. He accepted thy **life**, faith, and **contest** as myrrh, // for He is **rich** in **mercy**.

**Tone 7 Prokeimenon**  
The Lord shall give strength to His people. The Lord shall bless His people with peace. (Ps 28/29:11)  
**v: Offer to the Lord, O ye sons of God! Offer young rams to the Lord!** (Ps 28/29:1)

**Tone 7**  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

**v: It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Thy Name, O Most High.** (Ps 91/92:1)

**v: To declare Thy mercy in the morning, and Thy truth by night.** (Ps 91/92:2)

*Today's Scripture Readings:*

**1 Corinthians 1:10-18 (Epistle)**

Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

**Matthew 14:14-22 (Gospel)**

And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food." But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." He said, "Bring them here to Me." Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children. Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.

**FACE TO FACE –Without Shame or Fear Fr. Stephen Freeman**

We are apparently living in the age of the face, and I don't think it's necessarily bad. I know all the complaints about our culture of "selfies," and there are certainly many things in that to make us wonder, but our fascination with our faces long predates the technology of our phones. In the usage of the early Church, the word for face (prosopon) is also the word for person. It is the face that most truly reveals our identity, emotions, interests and a host of other things. Our ability to read the faces of others is sometimes highly

developed. In the Scriptures, the most intimate possible union of man and God is contained in the phrase "face-to-face." St. Paul equates beholding Christ face-to-face as the fulfillment of salvation itself.

I find our present fascination with the face (selfie's) to be a symptom of our search for meaning, place, and identity. That search, of course, can be healthy and salvific just as it can be morbid and selfish. In a mass culture of consumption, those things that most properly pertain to the true self are constantly homogenized and blended into a sea of commonality.

This is a very strange thing to be happening in a civilization that celebrates, even exalts, individuality. The cult of the individual is contradicted by the culture of consumption. The very things we purchase in order to display our uniqueness often come off a rack of similar items. We have traded the group (or tribe) for individuality.

Individuality is extremely fragile. In that it is singular and unique, everything around it tends to want to absorb it. That absorption is its destruction and disappearance. Within the tribe, faces become interchangeable and lose their meaning. There is very little distance between the tribe and the mob. Part of the emptiness of social media is its constant loss of the individual. Faces are replaced by names (or just "likes"). Who we are is quickly absorbed by the opinions we hold that take their place in a sea of other opinions. It is a formula that presses for the extreme, for only the extreme can be heard or seen.

Within the modern American tragedy of mass shootings, I wonder if there is not a perverse drive for individuality. Victims are often just that – victims – not individuals, persons, unique and unrepeatable. They become one of five, or twelve, or eight-six. The shooter can imagine that his name will be remembered and his face never forgotten. "Better to rule in hell than to serve in heaven." Of course, this perverted tragedy is a failure. Within weeks, the name of the shooter is forgotten, as well as their face. They simply join the ranks of a new tribe: "shooters."

Our face, our unique and true identity, can never exist in isolation: it must be seen by someone. Ironically, in our constant posting of our own image, our face becomes something mostly seen by ourselves. It is a solipsistic representation of self, truly ironic in that the image portrayed by the camera, like that in a mirror, is actually reversed when compared to what others see.