

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 – 7-28-2019**
Parish phone: 814-734-3801 Find us on the Web at:
www.orthodoxcrossingville.org

GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!

6th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 5. Holy Apostles of the Seventy and Deacons: Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, and Parmenas (1st c.). St. Pitirím, Bishop of Tambov (1698). Ven. Moses, Wonderworker, of the Kiev Caves (Far Caves—13th-14th c.). Martyr Julian of Dalmatia (2nd c.). Martyr Eustathius (Eustace—ca. 321), of Apamea. Ven. Paul of Xeropotamou, founder of the Monastery of St. Paul on Mt. Athos (10th c.). The Smolensk “HODIGITRIA” (“THE GUIDE”) Icon of the Most-holy Theotokos (brought from Constantinople in 1046). Icon of the Mother of God “of Tenderness” (1885).

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 Olvnik, 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 5 Troparion (Resurrection)
Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word,
co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit,
born for our salvation from the Virgin;
for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh,
to endure death, and to raise the dead//
by His glorious Resurrection.

Tone 3 Troparion (Holy Apostles of the Seventy and Deacons)
Holy Apostles Próchorus, Nicanor, Tímon, and Parménas,
entreat the merciful God, // to grant our souls forgiveness of
transgressions!

Tone 5 Kontakion (Resurrection)
Thou didst descend into hell, O my Savior,
shattering its gates as Almighty,
resurrecting the dead as Creator,
and destroying the sting of death.
Thou hast delivered Adam from the curse, O Lover of man, //
and we cry to Thee: O Lord, save us!

Tone 1 Kontakion (Holy Apostles of the Seventy and Deacons)
The glorious Nicanor, Próchorus, Parménas, and Tímon,
the honored deacons ↓ and ↑ eyewitnesses of the Word,
have been revealed as chosen vessels of the Faith.
Therefore, we celebrate your holy memory today, //
 blessing you with gladness of heart.

Tone 5 Prokeimenon
Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us and preserve us from this
generation forever. (Ps 11/12:7)
v: Save me, O Lord, for there is no longer any that is godly
(Ps 11/12:1)

Tone 5
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!
v: I will sing of Thy mercies, O Lord, forever; with my
mouth I will proclaim Thy truth from generation to generation.
(Ps 88/89:1)
v: For Thou hast said: “Mercy will be established
forever; My truth will be prepared in the heavens.” (Ps 88/89:2)

HOLY SCRIPTURE:

Romans 12:6-14 (Epistle)

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

Matthew 9:1-8 (Gospel)

So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city. Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you.” And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, “This Man blasphemes!” But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins” – then He said to the paralytic, “Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” And he arose and departed to his house. Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.

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.

+Our Church School program needs your help – Training for the Level One CGS Training will be held Aug. 12-16 at St Tikhon's Seminary – Housing and Food are provided. Contact Fr. Daniel or Autumn Bicko for more details.

SUMMER SCHEDULE

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:

What's with the Kingdom of God?

Thy Kingdom Come

Blessed are You on the throne of the glory of Your Kingdom, seated upon the Cherubim; always, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

It was You Who brought us from non-existence into being, and when we had fallen away You raised us up again, and did not cease to do all things until You had brought us up to heaven, and had endowed us with Your kingdom which is to come.

Quoted above are three references to the Kingdom of God in St. John Chrysostom's Liturgy (there are a total of 48). The interesting thing about these three quotes is how they view the relationship of the Kingdom to time. The first statement, familiar from the Lord's Prayer, seems to ask for something that is yet to happen: "Thy Kingdom Come." The second, taken from the priest's prayer of blessing just before the Trisagion sequence ("Holy God, Holy Mighty, etc."), seems to refer to a present tense: God is seated on the throne of the glory of His Kingdom. The third, from the Anaphora prayer (the primary prayer in the consecration of the Bread and Wine), clearly references the Kingdom as something that has already been given. "Had endowed" (past tense) is paired, in a very jarring juxtaposition of tenses, with "the Kingdom which is to come" (future tense).

What's with this strange treatment of time?

My childhood understanding of the Kingdom of God was that it was synonymous with heaven, or, at least, with the end of the world – the end of history – when God would wrap everything up and make everything right. It was very much "Thy Kingdom Come." This future sense was the dominant thought that caused the German scholar, Albert Schweitzer, in his seminal work, *The Search for the Historical Jesus*, to conclude that Jesus had, in fact, been mistaken, as had the early Church. He interpreted Jesus' statements regarding the Kingdom, particularly those in His apocalyptic teaching, to be evidence that Jesus thought His Kingdom would come about very soon. Schweitzer's observation was that such a thing didn't happen. Jesus was wrong and so were His disciples.

A major rebuttal of Schweitzer's work came from the Anglican scholar, C.H. Dodd, who argued for what he termed "realized eschatology." Jesus was right about what He said, for, in Christ, the Kingdom of God *did* come and is already at work among us. Or, in Jesus own words, "If I, by the Spirit of God, cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matt. 12:28, also Lk 11:20). And, in good Protestant fashion, the debate went on.

Dodd was correct to a large extent. The Kingdom of God that Jesus proclaimed is more than an event waiting to happen. We hear this in the parable of the Sheep and the Goats:

Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. The Kingdom has already been prepared "from the foundation of the world." The Kingdom already is, can be participated in now, and is yet to come. Is that confusing?

This is the strange world of *eschatology* (the study of "last things"). For some Christians, the word only refers to a series of events (vividly imagined) taking place at the end of the world. In the New Testament, and in the Fathers, the *eschaton* (end) is something far greater. Christ Himself is called both "Beginning" and "End" in the Book of Revelations. However, the "End" does not refer to a particular point in space and time (though at a particular point in space and time, its end and the "End" will coincide).

What is the Kingdom?

St. Maximus says it is the Holy Spirit. St. Paul affirms this: "The Kingdom of God does not consist of food or drink, but of righteousness, peace and joy and in the Holy Spirit" (Ro. 14:17). It is Christ's great and Holy Pascha, existing from before all time and forever (Rev. 13:8 calls Jesus the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"). The Kingdom of God already is.

That which already is – is the very thing that is also coming into the world. It is not itself coming into existence, but when it enters the world it transforms the world towards the Kingdom. Every time Christ heals the sick, gives sight to the blind, cleanses a leper, raises the dead, casts out a demon, it is this "End," this "Kingdom" that is being made manifest. Each such event dramatically illustrates Christ's word, "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

The Cup of the Eucharist is a participation in this End, in the Kingdom. We pray that our communion will be

for the vigilance of soul, for the remission of sins, for the communion of Your Holy Spirit, for the fulfillment of the kingdom of heaven, for boldness towards You, but not for judgment or condemnation.

After communion the priest prays:

O Christ! Great and most holy Pascha! O Wisdom, Word, and Power of God!

Grant that we may more perfectly partake of You in the never-ending Day of Your Kingdom.

There is also a future aspect that we look towards. St. Paul describes it in this way:

Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." ... When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all. (1 Cor. 15:24-28)

History and the Kingdom

If all of this is true, if the Kingdom of God is *already* complete and we are *already* able to participate in it and we *await* the day of its full manifestation, then what is the place of history and the events associated with our salvation that have occurred in space and time?

History and the Kingdom are intended to coincide. The focus of the Kingdom is precisely the union of the created world with God. There is a complete coinciding of creation and Kingdom in the death and resurrection of Christ. That which was, *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world* (Rev. 13:8), is also that which takes place in Jerusalem on that day. His death and resurrection are filled with such power that the creation was shaken, some of the ancients came out of their graves, the sky was darkened. These are signs that an utterly cosmic event was occurring.

But in that this *historical* event is also the primary *eternal* event, it has a presence that transcends that specific space and time. When we stand before the altar, we stand before Golgotha and the empty tomb. We do not merely remember them – they are there!

By the same token, the historical events that relate to our salvation, such as the Passover from Egypt, Joshua taking the Land of Canaan, Noah and the Flood, Abraham's promise, and so forth, are themselves significant as historical events because they, too, *participate* in that same eternal act of redemption. There is only one redemption, and that is Christ. What we see in the Scriptures of the Old Testament are the hints or the "shadow" (in the words of St. Maximus and St. Ambrose) of that which is to come – that which was revealed in the death and resurrection of Christ.

Our salvation is not a historical project. Rather, it is God's eternal project of saving history (the created world) by uniting it to His own life through the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ. This is the reason (as I have written at other times) that we cannot "build the Kingdom." You cannot build what is and always has been complete. The Kingdom is divine. Divine things only come in "complete." If it is divine, it is whole and has its own fullness.

We could never say that the historical events that participate in this one act of eternal redemption are unimportant. They have the same role as the wood of the Cross and the nails that held Jesus there. They are, if you will, elements of the Cross scattered through history. By the same token, we also cannot say that they are a chain of cause-and-effect, an older historical event creating a later historical event, etc. The incarnation of Christ is the cause of all things, it is said in the Fathers. That which is seen is temporary, that which is unseen is eternal, according to St. Paul.

The nature of our salvation as it has been made known to us forces us to speak about space and time in a manner that breaks many of the accepted rules of our modern world. Our modern rules of cause and effect would say that something happening in the first century cannot possibly be the cause of everything that happened before it. But that is how we speak.

In the words of St. Maximus:

The mystery of the Incarnation of the Word contains in itself the meaning of all the symbols and all the enigmas of Scripture, as well as the hidden meaning of all sensible and intelligible creation. But he who knows the mystery of the Cross and the Tomb knows also the essential principle of all things. Finally, he who penetrates yet further and finds himself initiated into the mystery of the Resurrection apprehends the end for which God created all things from the beginning.

The resurrection of Christ shatters the bonds of space and time and makes manifest that which is eternal. We eat and drink eternity in the Cup of Christ. phen Freeman