

both exciting and frightening in the extreme. If I said yes, then everything I had said I wanted would start to come true (maybe). And everything I knew as comfortable and secure would disappear (with four children to feed). And if everything I said I wanted began to come true, then the frightening possibility that I might not actually want it would also be revealed! I could multiply all of these possibilities many times over and not even begin to relate everything that was in my heart.

But the point that had found me was the beginning of the true search. The risk, the reward, the threat, the danger, the joy and the sorrow, all of them loomed over me, frequently driving me to prayer. I made the leap and began a tumultuous period in my life. But my life, like most, eventually settled down and slowly became *obvious*.

St. Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, one of the great monastic heroes of the Celtic lands, had a way of dealing with the obvious. He would walk into the North Sea from the island where he lived, and stand in the waves up to his neck. It was a dangerous sea, not like an American beach. He stood there at the point of danger – and prayed. St. Brendan crossed the Atlantic with his monastic companions in a boat made of animal hides. Countless thousands of monastics wandered into deserts, forests, holes in the ground, islands, all in order to place themselves at that point where God may be found. Seeking God is not done in the place of safety, though it is the safest place in all the world.

Eros does not *shop*. True desire, that which is actually endemic to our nature, is not satisfied with the pleasures sought by the passions. It will go to extreme measures, even deep into pain, in order to be found by what it seeks.

All of this is the apocalyptic life of true faith. The question for us is how to live there, or even just go there for once in our lives. I “studied” Orthodoxy for 20 years. All of my friends knew (and often joked) about my interest.

Many said they were not surprised when I converted.

I was. I was surprised because I know my own cowardice and fear of shame. If you liked Ferraris, your friends wouldn't be surprised if you had photos and models, films and t-shirts. But if you sold your house and used the money to make a down payment on one, you'd be thought a fool, possibly insane. Seeking God is like that.

There are quiet ways that do not appear so radical. The right confession before a priest can be such a moment. Prayer before the icons in the corner of a room can become such a moment, though it takes lots of practice and much attention. They cannot be objects and the prayer cannot be obvious.

All of this is of God, may He be thanked. We do not have to invent this for ourselves. It is not “technique.” The God who wants us to seek is also kind enough to hide. Finding out where He is hiding is the first step. Finding out where *you* are hiding is the next. But the greatest and most wonderful step is turning the corner, buying the field, selling everything that you have, picking up the coin, making that phone call, saying “yes” and “yes” and “yes.” ---Fr. Stephen Freeman

UPCOMING EVENTS AND SERVICES

+ Sunday School today

+Regular Sunday Divine Liturgy and Great Vespers on Saturday as usual.

-The Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple- -Feastal Divine Liturgy Nov. 21st 9:30am Mon. Nov. 20th at 6:00pm. -Great Vespers with Lyta

-Akathist: Glory to God for All Things Wed. Nov. 22nd 6pm

- Divine Liturgy for St Andrew The First Called- Thursday Nov. 30th. Great Vespers Wed. 6pm

St. Nicholas Party
Sunday, Dec. 3rd during Coffee Hour
(This will be Sunday School- Children will be singing some selections, there will be games and activities for all)

- Divine Liturgy for St. Nicholas Wednesday, Dec. 6th at 9:30am
Great Vespers- 6pm Tuesday

- Divine Liturgy for St. Herman Wednesday, Dec. 13th at 6:00pm
Great Vespers- 6pm Tuesday

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD SERVICE SCHEDULE

- Akathist to the Mother of God - Wed. Dec. 20th
- Royal Hours - Friday, Dec. 22nd at 9am
- Holy Supper begins at 5:00pm on Dec. 24th with Nativity Vigil to follow. (Fr. Joseph Gall will be celebrating with us)
- Divine Liturgy Nativity of our Lord Dec. 25th 9:30am

- The Royal Hours of Theophany – Friday, Jan. 5th 9:00am
- Vigil for Theophany- 6:00pm (with the Great Blessing of Waters)
- St. Basils Divine Liturgy – (With blessing of waters- Cussewago Creek) Tuesday, Jan. 6th – 9:30am
Blessing of Homes begins...Please sign up.

MISSIONS TEAM –“We bless Christ when we bless the poor”

Fall/Winter Missions Drive: The missions committee is currently collecting clean winter clothing, blankets, and quilts which will be donated to The Upper Room of Erie. All donations can be dropped off in the first Sunday School Class room on the left.

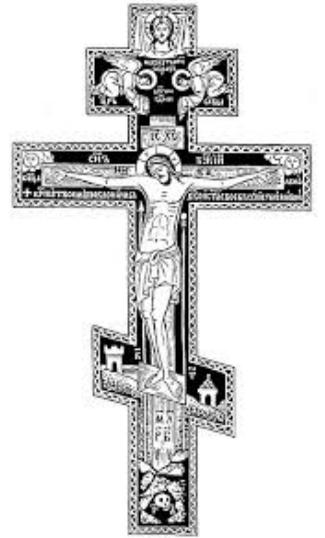
House Keeping-

--A friendly reminder to parents of little ones, please try to keep loud disruptions to a minimum, keep up the reminders to participate and pray.

--A reminder to everyone to continue to fulfill your financial pledge to the Church. Pledge forms can be placed in the offering basket. IF you have not received one, there will be some available by the bulletins in the narth

Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

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1641 Rev. Fr. Daniel Mathewson – *Rector*
Lord's Day – Nov 19th, 2017 Parish phone:
814-734-3801 Find us on the Web at:
www.orthodoxcrossingville.org or on Face
book: Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church



GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!

24th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 7. Prophet Obadiah (Abdia—9th c. B.C.). Martyr Barlaam of Caesarea in Cappadocia (ca. 304). Ven. Varlaam, Abbot of the Kiev Caves (Near Caves—1065). Finding of the relics of Monk Martyr Adrian of Poshekhónsk (Yaroslavl’—1625). Martyr Azes of Isauria and with him 150 soldiers (3rd c.). Martyr Heliodorus in Pamphylia (ca. 273). Ven. Hilarion, Monk and Wonderworker of Thessalonica (Georgian—875). Repose of St. Philaret (Drozdov), Metropolitan of Moscow (1867).

PLEASE INCLUDE THESE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN YOUR DAILY PRAYERS:

Those in need –Fr. Andrew, Fr. David, Mat. Donna, Fr. John, Fr. Nicholas, Fr. Paul, Fr. George, Mat. Suzanne, Meghan, Pearl, Karen, Mary, Stavros, Marilyn, Theona, Sara, Evan, Eugene, John, David, Ann, Thomas, Timothy, Jeremiah, Renee, Delani, Emily, George, Tanya, The Homebound... Vincent, Tanya, Mary-Louise, Richard, Helen, John, Irene, Ruth, Josephine, William, Claudia... Travelers.. ...Catechumens –Rick and Christian Our Missionaries Abroad...Fr. David and Mt. Rozanne, Military servers...Greg ...Departed Orthodox...Newly Departed – 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

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 2 Troparion (for Prophet Obadiah)

We celebrate the memory

of Thy Prophet Obadiah, O Lord;

through him we beseech Thee:

“Save our souls!”

Tone 4 Troparion (for Martyr Barlaam)

Armed with youthful fervor,

Thou didst endure martyrdom in old age and glorified Christ.

Thou didst offer Him thy right hand as a whole burnt offering

and thy holy soul as a blameless sacrifice.

Intercede that all that be granted forgiveness, Great-martyr

Barlaam!

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 1 Kontakion (Prophet Obadiah)

The great Obadiah, acquiring a mind luminous with divine splendor,

speaks through the Holy Spirit, proclaiming things to come. Today we

honor him with faithful minds, //

celebrating his holy memory which enlightens the hearts of men.

Tone 3 Kontakion (Martyr Barlaam)

Though weak with old age thou didst vanquish the Evil One

in thy mighty contest, O Barlaam.

Thou didst endure the rack like one without a body,

and steadfastly endured the burning of thy hand.

Therefore, God the Word has crowned thee with a crown of glory.

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)

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.

Today's Scripture Readings:

Ephesians 2:14-22 (Epistle)

For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has

broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His

flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in

ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two,

thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God

in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to

those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one

Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers

and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of

the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the

apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief

cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together,

grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being

built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Luke 12:16-21 (Gospel)

Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: “The ground of a certain

rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself,

saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’

So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build

greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. ’And I

will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many

years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.” But God said to

him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then

whose will those things be which you have provided?’ So is he

who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

WHY DOES GOD HIDE?

God hides. God makes Himself known. God hides.

This pattern runs throughout the Scriptures. A holy hide-and-peek, the

pattern is not accidental nor unintentional. It is rooted in the very nature of

things in the Christian life. Christianity whose God is not hidden is not

Christianity at all. But why is this so?

In a previous [article](#), I wrote:

Our faith is about learning to live in the revealing of things that were hidden.

True Christianity should never be obvious. It is, indeed, the struggle to live

out what is not obvious. The Christian life is rightly meant to be an

apocalypse.

God is not obvious. That which is obvious is an *object*. Objects are inert, static

and passive. The tree in my front yard is objectively there (or so it seems).

When I get up in the morning and take the dog outside, I expect the tree to be

there. If it is autumn, I might study its leaves for their wonderful color

change (it's a Gingko). But generally, I can ignore the tree – or not. That's

what objects are good for. They ask nothing of us. The freedom belongs

entirely to us, not to them.

This is the function of an idol – to make a god into an object.

He/she/it *must* be there. The idol captures the divine, objectifies it and

renders it inert and passive. The God of the Christians smashes idols. He will

not stay put or become a passive participant in our narcissism. He is not the

God-whom-I-want. Christ tells us, “Ask, and you will receive. Seek and you

will find. Knock and the door will be opened.” The very center of the life

promised us in Christ *requires* asking, seeking and knocking. The reason is

straightforward: asking, seeking and knocking are a *mode of existence*. But

our usual mode of existence is to live an obvious life (a life among objects).

Have you ever noticed that it's easier to buy an icon and add it to your icon

corner than it is to actually spend time and pray in your corner? There is a

kind of “Orthodox acquisitiveness” that substitutes such actions for asking,

seeking and knocking. Acquisition is part of our obvious form of existence.

We have been trained in our culture to consume. We acquire objects. On the

whole, we don't even have to seek the objects we acquire, other than to

engage in a little googling. We no longer forage or hunt. We *shop*.

But we were created to ask, seek and knock. That mode of existence puts us

in the place where we become truly human. The Fathers wrote about this

under the heading of *eros*, desire. Our culture has changed the meaning

of *eros* into erotic, in which we learn to consume through our passions. This is

a distortion of true *eros*.

Christ uses the imagery of seeking or true desire (*eros*) in a number of His

parables: The Merchant in Search of Fine Pearls; The Woman with the Lost

Coin; The Good Shepherd and the Lost Sheep; The Father in the Prodigal

Son; The Treasure Buried in a Field... But how does seeking (*eros*) differ

from what I want? Are these parables not images of consuming? Learning

the difference is part of the point in God's holy hide-and-peek. The mode of

existence to which He calls us must be learned, and it must be learned

through practice.

Objects are manageable. They do not overwhelm or ask too much of us.

Consumption is an activity in which we ourselves always have the upper

hand. St. James offers this thought:

You desire and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You

fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do

not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.

(James 4:2-3) What we seek (*eros*) in a godly manner, is something that

cannot be managed or objectified. It is always larger and greater than we are.

As such, it even presents a little danger. It may require that we be vulnerable

and take risks. We are afraid that we might not find it while also being afraid

that we *will*.

The parables are not about a merchant with a string of pearls, or a woman

with a coin collection. The merchant risks everything he owns just for the

chance of buying this one pearl. The woman seeks this coin as though there

were no other money in the world.

When I was nearing the point of my conversion to Orthodoxy, a primary

barrier was finding secular employment. It's hard for someone whose resume

only says, “priest,” to get a job or even an interview for a job. That search

had gone on, quietly, for nearly two years. It was not an obsession – rather,

more like a hobby. But one day, a job found me. The details are not

important here. But the reality is. The simple fact that a job was likely to

happen, that I only had to say, “Yes,” was