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 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 edge 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.

Eras 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 25 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 have never admitted, Yes, I fear I’ll lose my head, you’ve been surprised if you haven’t; 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 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.

- 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. Basil’s Divine Liturgy – (With blessing of waters- Cussewago Creek) Tuesday, Jan. 8th – 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

UPCOMING EVENTS AND SERVICES

- Sunday School today

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

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Saints Peter and Paul

Orthodox Church

25636 N. Mosiertown Rd Crossingville, PA
1641 Rev. Fr. Daniel Mathewson – Rector

GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!


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


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Tone 7 Troperon (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 Troperon (for Prophet Obadiah)
We celebrate the memory
of Thy Prophet Obadiah, O Lord;
through him we beseech Thee:
“Save our souls!”

Tone 4 Troperon (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 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 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.
(Pr 28:29:1)

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 asked 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-seek, 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 living 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 cannot 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, 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 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-seek. 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 tells us, “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.”

So, we are 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.

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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 seeks 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 had gone on, quietly, for nearly two years. It was not an obsession – more like a hobby. But one day, a job found me. The details are not straightforward: 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.

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