



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 – 7-19-2020

Parish phone: 814-734-3801 Find us on the Web at:
www.orthodoxcrossingville.org

6th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone

5. Uncovering of the Relics of Ven. Seraphim of Sarov (1903). Fathers of the 1st Six Ecumenical Councils. St. Theodore of Edessa, Mesopotamia (848). Ven. Macrina, sister of St. Basil the Great (380). Ven. Dius, Abbot, of Antioch (ca. 430). Rt. Blv. Román, Prince of Riazan' (1270). Ven. Paisii of the Kiev Caves (Far Caves—14th c.). Bl. Stephen (1427), King of Serbia, and his mother, St. Militsa (1405).

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Pray with out ceasing...

PLEASE INCLUDE THESE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN

YOUR DAILY PRAYERS: Those in need -Fr. Andrew, Fr. Isaac, Fr. David, Fr. Anthony, Fr. Joseph, Mat. Gail, Mat. Donna, Mat. Pirsilla, Megan W., George, Stephanie R., Matt, Alice, Margaret, Charlotte, Cayllin Mary G., Melissa, Debra, Eliza, Pearl, William, Karen, John, Nickolas, Timothy, Amanda, Damian, Delani, Jeremiah, Christine, Rick, Samuel, Timothy M., Andrew, Kati, Simeon, Megan, Andrew, Margret-Ann, Lorelly, Evan, Valentina The Homebound Ann, Tanya, Richard, Ruth, Lillian (Bernice) Catechumen- Christian... Military servers...Greg ...Newly Departed : David Witten, Fr. Paul Lasar, William Suschek, Claudia Sukel, Theona Sekel, Helen Miller,...Departed Orthodox -Mat. Anastasia, Jeff, Catherine, Marilyn, Rodney, Irene, John B., John S., Ann, Katherine, Vernon, Paul, James Nickolai, Andrew, Peter, Paul, Margaret, Michael Mary Ann, Timothy... Special requests... Paul, Gilbert, Phyllis, Anthony, Ian, Paul, James, Sean, Liam, Bill, Wesley, Kim, Jim, Margaret, Loren, Russell, Julia, Shelby, Janet, Lynn, Margret. Helen, Dan, Jonathan, Donna, Nicholas, Maya, Eric, Mia

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 8 Troparion (Fathers)

You are most glorious, O Christ our God!
You have established the Holy Fathers as lights on the earth. Through them You have guided us to the true Faith.// O greatly compassionate One, glory to You!

Tone 5 Kontakion (Resurrection)

You descended into hell, O my Savior, shattering its gates as Almighty, resurrecting the dead as Creator, and destroying the sting of death. You have delivered Adam from the curse, O Lover of Man, // and we cry to You: "O Lord, save us!"

Tone 8 Kontakion (Fathers)

The Apostles' preaching and the Fathers' doctrines have established one Faith for the Church. Adorned with the robe of truth, woven from heavenly theology, // It defines and glorifies the great mystery of piety.

Tone 5 Prokeimenon (Resurrection)

You, O Lord, shall 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 4 Prokeimenon (Song of the Fathers)

Blessed are You, O Lord God of our fathers, / and praised and glorified is Your name forever! (Song of the Three Holy Children, v. 3)

Tone 5

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!
v: I will sing of Your mercies, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim Your truth from generation to generation. (Ps 88/89:1)
v: For You have said: "Mercy will be established forever; My truth will be prepared in the heavens." (Ps 88/89:2)

Tone 1

v: The Lord, the God of gods, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. (Ps 49/50:1)

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.

Hebrews 13:7-16 (Epistle, Fathers)

Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them. We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come.

Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

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.

John 17:1-13 (Gospel, Fathers)

Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.

Services and Announcements:

Sun. July 19th hours -9:15am

Divine Liturgy -9:30am

Parish Council meeting -12noon

Mon. July 20th Great vespers —6pm

Tues. July 21st Divine Liturgy -9:30am

(Fr Daniel celebrates Gods grace in his 14th year of priesthood and 29th year of full time Christian service as a pastor and teacher— lunch to follow)

-Coffee Hour on Sunday's is resuming now.

-Parish Picnic following Divine Liturgy on August 6th and 15th.

-Atrium and parish education will resume on August 23rd.

-missions team and Outreach are going to be contacting you in the coming days about sending notes of encouragement to those shut in. Many times we do not realize what they are going through, and sometimes a personal word can really lift someone up.

Christians Must Be Crazy

“To get ahead one must have a crazy streak, in the good sense of the term. Depending on how you use this crazy streak, you can become either a saint or a hero. But if you are not helped and are led astray, you can also become a criminal. One who doesn't have a crazy streak cannot become either a saint or a hero ... Our heart must become foolhardy” St. Paisios the New of Mt. Athos.

The above quote by St. Paisios reminds me of the quote from St. Anthony the Great, *“The time will come when men will go mad, and when they see someone who is not mad they will attack him saying, ‘you are mad, you are not like us.’”*

A Christian must be willing to be thought of as “crazy” by the world. St. Paul put forth this spiritual principle at the very beginning in these terms, *“Did not God make foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world knew not God through its wisdom, it pleased God through the foolishness of the preaching to save those who believe ... We proclaim Christ Who hath been crucified ... to the Greeks ... foolishness”* (1 Cor 1:20-23). And again he explains, *“But the material-minded man receives not the things of the Spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him, and he is not able to come to know it, because it is spiritually examined”* (ibid. 2:14).

When the madness of the world becomes the standard of “sanity” then Christians must be crazy. The world operates heavily upon the fear of men. It seeks to control persons through the fear of being thought of as “crazy.” And yet, when we, as Christians, embrace Christ as our Lord and Savior, we embrace that which the world considers, foolishness, craziness. So, the true Christian is destined to be called “mad” by those that are ruled by the real madness of the world.

St. Paisios tells us that to be “crazy” we must acquire bravery, courage (all subsequent quotes from St. Paisios are from the book, *“Spiritual Awakening”*). I found it very interesting, in light of current events, that he emphatically teaches that a true Christian will be brave and not fear death in the true sense (there is a vast difference between seeming “thrill-seeking” and the true Christian state of fearlessness before death). If we as Christians act out of fear then we are adopting the madness of the world through which we become cowards and lose the spiritual “craziness” needed to follow bravely after Christ the Lord.

He tells us, *“Today, for one to be able to face the difficulties he encounters, he must have Christ in his heart, from Whom he will receive divine consolation in order to have a sense of self-sacrifice.”* Spiritual “craziness” is rooted in bravery, which is founded in self-sacrifice. Self-sacrifice is perfectly exemplified in Christ our Lord, who, it is written, *“for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right-hand of the throne of God”* (Heb. 12:2). The joy was the knowledge of those many who through the Cross will be reconciled to God. He endured being thought a fool, a criminal, and the shame that follows with it, so to offer the greatest “self-sacrifice,” which is an image for all who will follow Him. He did so first and foremost to set persons spiritually free.

For this reason, St. Paisios teaches, *“If anyone has not made the decision about death and is not prepared to die, nothing can be achieved. It all starts from here.”* And with words that hit very close to our modern worries and cares, he proclaims, *“If people do not think about death, they are living outside of reality. Those who fear death and love the vain life of this world also fear germs and are constantly*

overcome by a timidity that always grips them in a state of spiritual death. Daring people are never afraid of death, and that is why they struggle with *philotimo* and self-renunciation. Because they place death before them on a daily basis, they prepare themselves more spiritually and they undertake daring discipline.”

And what can we say of a world that trembles before a virus? Or Christians who are willing to wholesale the holy things of the faith to “keep people safe” from a virus? This quote made me wonder about that. Is God allowing current events, in part, so to expose our possible state of lukewarmness and spiritual cowardice? How have we, as Christians, behaved in the face of the threat of death (in the form of a virus)? I believe we must contemplate this deeply. Have we shown spiritual heroism or cowardice?

As we now all face a daily and constant assault of propaganda and “information,” much of which is purposely intended to destabilize and confuse people, St. Paisios gives us much needed spiritual advice, “*We mustn't lose our cool at critical times. We must stay calm and let our brain think. Because, if the brain doesn't think, one simple foolish move can become an act of betrayal. No matter what is happening, we must pray, think and act. The best way to try and face a difficult situation is by spiritual means. But today, unfortunately, we lack both types of bravery, both spiritual and the natural.*”

Again I would challenge us all to ruminate, have we, as Christians, been facing the current crisis by spiritual means, or have we abdicated and placed our hopes on merely the means of men? (This is not to create a dichotomy, but rather to ask what is evident as primary in our actions?) Have we truly responded spiritually, or have CDC guidelines become more authoritative than our spiritual life and traditions?

The saint goes on, “*Spiritual bravery is born out of sanctity and a boldness before God, that enables us to overcome a difficulty by spiritual means.*” It seems very clear that any crisis is overcome in reality by first and foremost spiritual means. This is the primary and most vital work of believers and the Church.

What is the source of spiritual bravery? “*Let us fear God, not men, no matter how evil they may be. Fear of God transforms even the most cowardly person into a brave hero. The more we are united to God, the less we are afraid of anything.*”

And conversely, I believe one may say, that the more we fear things of this world the more this exposes that we lack true fear of God. Fear of the world transforms us into cowards; in such a state we may well surrender heavenly things to keep worldly status. Offering us hope with sternness he says, “*If you are not somewhat spiritual, you will not be able to endure.*” Somewhat! Glory to God! We have hope! For any of us, through our desire and the grace of God, may be “somewhat” spiritual. Let us be somewhat brave and fearless!

The saint also identifies the modern lack of zeal as a symptom of spiritual cowardliness, a very real peril in our times. It seems the word apathy could be given to this state. Frequently, dangers are seen, to

some degree, and no one wants to do anything about them nor even warn others. He elaborates, “*Today most people prefer that others get the snake [image for danger, my note] out of the hole. Fine, but if they are unwilling to get it out, at least they could give a warning, 'Be careful, there may be a snake in that hole.'* This way one can approach an issue with some degree of caution and preparedness. But even that is not done.” Thus we see, if we are not willing to take on the “snake” ourselves (by God’s grace), he says at least let us warn others. I noted this spiritual principle in my article about being a spiritual watchman. Yet, lamentably, even that rarely happens. Somehow it seems a false mentality has crept in. Even many Christians believe that “leaving the snake” alone is somehow the more virtuous way. “Just focus on the positive!” “Don’t frighten people about snakes!” But to do so is to, in reality, cause greater harm to people (that’s not to say all must be a warning but that there is, as in all things, a balance.)

Then St. Paisios gives us modern Christians a strong rebuke, “*If we had lived in the times of the martyrs, given the rationality we have, we would probably say, 'I only deny God externally, not internally; this way I'll have my position and be able to help some poor soul'*” – as a side, note how the enemy frequently uses the delusion of “care for others” to deceive people; consider how “care for neighbor” is being manipulated in current events – “*Back then, even if only incense was thrown into the fire of idol worshippers, the Church would excommunicate them, making them penitents in tears ... Or, during the Iconoclastic controversy, people were forced to burn or destroy Icons, and they preferred martyrdom rather than desecrate the Icons ...*” And what should we think as many forbid, in our times, the veneration of icons for fear of spreading a virus? Or the other massive alterations in holy church practices? What would the saint say unto us?

Have we lost our spiritual bravery? I ask with a deep desire that we all, myself included, meditate on these courageous words from St. Paisios.

Thus, what must we acquire so as to spiritually endure these times? We must be willing to be thought of as crazy. We must have spiritual (and even natural) bravery. We must live above the constant fear-mongering of the world, most of all as it seeks to control people through the fear of a virus, death, and so forth. It seems very evident that to act out of a position of fear of worldly things, and thereby adapting worldly madness, will bring nothing but spiritual disaster in the end.

May we hear the instruction of this saint. May we fear nothing but God alone. Let’s risk being a little crazy.