

tragedy but embraces its consequences in His death on the Cross. It is fully within our freedom that He addresses us and rescues us from the consequences of our own evil (and the evil of others).

Of course, such a voluntarily weak God is deeply frustrating. He could do so much more. What we want Him to do is not love some in order to love others. If He ignores the freedom of the evil-doer in order to preserve the life of the innocent, we ask Him to violate His love (or negate it). This reality creates the paradox of love and freedom. That paradox is only solved in the mystery of Pascha itself. In His voluntary suffering and death, God takes upon Himself the suffering that love allowed to our freedom. Without violating that freedom, He nullifies the effects of its abuse in the resurrection of the dead (not just His own, but that of all).

All of this turns the usual arguments (and thoughts) about the so-called “problem of evil” on its head. Those arguments require a God whose power selectively loves and nowhere limits itself. When I have written that Pascha is at the heart of everything (and I believe this faithfully represents the teaching of the Church) this weakness born of love is its consequence. It is the love of God that surrounds us and calls us to be His friends. It seeks us, face to face, even searching for us when we hide. But it is a love that stands weakly at the border of our freedom, and waits for our invitation. -- Fr. Stephen Freeman

#### HOLY DAY SERVICES UP COMING

+Nativity of the Theotokos –

Friday , September 7<sup>th</sup> – Great Vespers with Lytia -6pm

Saturday, September 8<sup>th</sup> – Divine Liturgy - 9:30am

+Elevation of the Holy Cross—

Thursday, September 13<sup>th</sup> – Great Vespers with Lytia - 6pm

Friday, September 14<sup>th</sup> – Divine Liturgy – 9:30am

#### +Memory Eternal+

**Irene Hoover reposed in the Lord this past week,  
please keep her and the family in your prayers.  
Memorial donations can be made to the parish for  
Irene.**

#### Announcing...

**The Baptism of Charlotte Wallace will be held on  
Sat. Sept. 15<sup>th</sup> at 10am. Please join us.**

#### UPCOMING SERVICES AND EVENTS

- **Today - Parish Design Team – meeting today**

- **Next Sunday Sept. 9<sup>th</sup> – Our Catechesis of the Good  
Shepard education program begins.  
3-6 ages - Autumn Bicko  
7-10 ages – Kyra Mathewson  
11-18 ages – Rdr. Nathaniel, Jesse, Seraphim  
19& up – Fr. Daniel**

-**Today we will have a prayer of blessing for our “Presenters”  
for this years education program.**

- **Tues. Sept.4<sup>th</sup> -7pm Church school leaders  
meet- – Room prep and lesson prep.**

-**Tues. Sept. 25<sup>th</sup> - Parish Council Meeting – 6pm**

-**Sun. Sept. 16<sup>th</sup> Lsdies Altar Society Meeting**

-**Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup> – Orthodox Day at PNC Park -Pirates v. Brewers**

-**Sept. 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> Parish Retreat – Theme: Becoming a  
Healing Presence – With Dr. Al Rossi**

#### **Remembering in our prayers...**

- Margaret Suscheck – home recovering
- Marilyn Filipos continues her recovery at Meadville rehab center on Grove St.
- Bill Schmidt – upcoming surgery
- Pearl Schmidt -
- Melissa Baldwin -

## 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 – 9-2-2018** 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!**

**14th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 5. Ven. Anthony and Theodosius of the Kiev Caves (10th-11th c.). Martyr Mamas of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, and his parents Martyrs Theodotus and Rufina (3rd c.). St. John the Faster, Patriarch of Constantinople (595). The 3618 Martyrs who suffered at Nicomedia (3rd-4th c.). The “KALUGA” Icon of the Most-holy Theotokos (1748).**

**PLEASE INCLUDE THESE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN YOUR DAILY PRAYERS:** Those in need –Fr. Andrew, Fr. David, Mat. Gail, Mat. Donna, Mat. Pirsilla, Pearl, William, Karen, John, Mary, Stavros, Marilyn, Theona, Ann, Timothy, Theresa, Judy, Genevieve, Delani, Jeremiah, Nathan and Kyra, Margaret, Melissa, 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, Margaret, Loren ....

**Today’s 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 4 Troparion (Martyr Mamas)**  
**Thy holy martyr Mamas, O Lord,**  
**through his suffering has received an incorruptible crown from Thee,**  
**our God.**

**For having Thy strength, he laid low his adversaries,**  
**and shattered the powerless boldness of demons.//**  
**Through his intercessions save our souls!**

**Tone 4 Troparion (St John the Faster)**  
**In truth thou wast revealed to thy flock as a rule of faith,**  
**an image of humility and a teacher of abstinence;**  
**thy humility exalted thee;**  
**thy poverty enriched thee.**  
**Hierarch Father John,**  
**entreat Christ our God//**  
**that our souls may be saved!**

**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 3 Kontakion (Martyr Mamas)**  
**Holy Mamas, lead thy people as a flock to life-giving pastures**  
**with the staff God has given thee;**  
**crush the invisible and fierce enemies beneath the feet of those**  
**who honor thee!**  
**For all of those who are in danger//**  
**have received thee as their fervent intercessor.**

**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)*

### *Today’s Scripture Readings:*

#### **2 Corinthians 1:21-2:4 (Epistle)**

Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth. Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand. But I determined this within myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow. For if I make you sorrowful, then who is he who makes me glad but the one who is made sorrowful by me? And I wrote this very thing to you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow over those from whom I ought to have joy, having confidence in you all that my joy is the joy of you all. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.

#### **Matthew 22:1-14 (Gospel)**

And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: “The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. Again, he sent out other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.”’ But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.’ So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ For many are called, but few are chosen.”

### **LOVE AND FREEDOM**

The most difficult aspect of love is the freedom it inherently requires. Love, in its ultimate and proper form, only exists between equals. There can be a sort of benevolence and nobility towards another who is not equal, but never love. This makes it difficult to understand the God-who-is-love.

It will quickly be said by most that God is not our equal, and that we can never be His equal. What we suggest by that is that He can never love us and we can never love Him. He can be kind and caring towards us, and we can be affectionate and respectful towards Him, but we can never love Him as our equal.

Against this denial is the blatant Christian teaching (constantly affirmed in the Orthodox Church) that God’s intention towards us is to raise us up as equals. We say that “God became man so that man could become God.” Often that statement is “fudged.” We quickly add that we do not mean that human beings will become “God” in the same manner that He is God. But what the Fathers say is that we will become, by grace, everything that God is by nature. This is to say that we will become what He is because it is His gift to us.

And in this gift, we can say that He loves us. He intends to raise us up as equals. Christ says, “I no longer call you servants... but friends (Jn. 15:15). He has held nothing back from us.

The image that speaks of this most deeply for me is that of seeing God “face to face.” This is much more than an expression of closeness or visibility. It is also an expression of an encounter with an equal.

All of this, of course, is predicated on the fact that God wills Himself to be our equal. It is His condescension that makes it possible. He became “small” and “weak,” not only to enter into our world, but, in entering it, to come as our equal. He came as a man among men, not as a ruler or a lord. He washed feet with the suggestion that we should do the same.

And this is love. Love is only possible between equals. This is perhaps not obvious to us at first. We think of parent and child and do not consider them equal. But, properly, they are. Something which establishes our equality with one another is the nature of our “boundaries.” There is something inviolable and intrinsically deserving of regard and respect between equals. With my dog, such a boundary does not quite exist. He conforms to my will and, generally, gets no vote in matters that arise. A child is not a dog. Though a child requires more guidance and help from an adult, they have boundaries that remain. Those boundaries say to an adult, “You cannot trespass here, without doing harm.” The child’s boundaries become equal to the parent in that moment.

For that matter, even a dog has a certain form of equality: that of a fellow creature. We cannot do with them just anything. Cruelty is real and constitutes an unwarranted violation of an animal.

It is said by some that God has no boundaries regarding us, that He is God and may do with us (and to us) whatever He wills. This, of course, is true in an abstract sense. However, it is not true of God as He has made Himself known in Christ. Christ is a God who “asks.” He is the God who allows a freedom so great that it can kill Him.

The mystery of our freedom is found in the condescending love of God. The exercise of our freedom, particularly when used for evil ends, inevitably makes God appear weak or non-existent. We rarely consider the fact that it makes Him look like an equal, and an equal who loves us. Obviously, this allows for the tragedy of our evil actions. But, even there, God does not exempt Himself from that