

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-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 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 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."

Holy Actions:

+**Missions Team** The Team will continue to collect food pantry items for Edinboro University Food pantry. See Anna R. or Debbie K. for more details.

---Also, There are OCMC summer mission trip scholarships available for anyone interested. See board in hall for more information on trips or see www.ocmc.org

+**Outreach Team** plans to have a booth at 2nd Saturday in Meadville in the next few months, volunteers are needed, see Isaac Bicko for more Information.

Holy Services:

Today -- **Blessing of the Parish Cemetery following Divine Liturgy**
-- CGS Atrium will be open for little ones today.

+Many Years to Fr. David Smoley celebrating his 55th Anniversary to the Holy Priesthood TODAY. May the Lord grant him many more years of service!!

Mid-Feast Prayers with - Film Showing of Case for Christ with discussion -Wed. May 22nd 6pm

Holy Ascension of the Lord - June 6th

Patronal Fest Day and Parish Picnic Saturday June 29th 10:30am

UPCOMING

-*Heirloom Garden Plants will be available Next week..*(Please make a donation for the plants, donations will go to the Edinboro food bank.

-**Mother -Baby Shower for Kyra and Anna (And...)** Saturday, May 25th at 3pm – Hosted by the Ladies Altar Society – Bring a nourishing gluten- free dish to share. Kyra is registered at Amazon and Target.

-**Panahidka/Luncheon for Vern Baldwin – Sunday May 26th Baked Chicken provided please bring a potluck dish to share.**

-**Chicken Barbeque - with Halupki July 14th 12-3pm**

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 – 5-19-2019**

Parish phone: 814-734-3801

Find us on the Web at: www.orthodoxcrossingville.org

THE PARALYTIC
CHRIST IS RISEN!



4th SUNDAY OF PASCHA - Tone

3. Paralytic. Hieromartyr Patrick, Bishop of Prussa, and his companions: Presbyters Acacius, Menander, and Polyenus (2nd-3rd c.). Ven. Cornelius, Abbot of Komet' (Vologdá—1537). Ven. Cornelius, Abbot of Paleostrov (15th c.). Rt. Blv. John, Prince of Uglich, tonsured as Ignatius (Vologdá—1523). Ven. Sergius of Shukhtomsk (1609). St. John Bishop of the Goths in the Crimea (8th c.). Rt. Blv. Dimitry Donskoy, Grand Prince of Moscow (1389).

PLEASE INCLUDE THESE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN YOUR DAILY PRAYERS: Newly Illumined Syra, Justin, Catherine ...

Those in need – Fr. Samuel, Fr. Andrew, Fr. David, Fr. Anthony, Mat. Gail, Mat. Donna, Mat. Pirsilla, Eliza, Paul, Pearl, William, Joseph, Terry, Rich, Karen, John, Stavros, Theona, Nickolas, Timothy, Judy, James, Amanda, Damian, Delani, Jeremiah, Megan, Mary, Christine, Rick, Timothy, The Homebound... Ann, Tanya, Richard, Ruth, William, Claudia Catechumens-Christian ... Travelers ... Military servers... Greg ... Newly Departed –Helen Miller, Anna Anderson, Rodney Senyo, Josephine Olnvik, Marilyn Filipos, Irene Hoover... 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, Anthony, Ian, Paul, Daleen, James, Sean, Liam, Bill, Wesley, Zera, Kim, Jim, Margaret, Loren, Nick, Russell, Julia, Shelby, Janet, Mareen, Lynn, Jarrod, Zach.

Tone 3

Troparion

(Resurrection)

Let the heavens rejoice!

Let the earth be glad!

For the Lord has shown strength with His arm.

He has trampled down death by death.

He has become the first born of the dead.

He has delivered us from the depths of hell,

and has granted to the world//

great mercy.

Tone 3 Kontakion (from the Pentecostarion)
By Thy divine intercession, O Lord,
as Thou didst raise up the Paralytic of old,
so raise up my soul, paralyzed by sins and thoughtless acts;
so that being saved I may sing to Thee://
“Glory to Thy power, O compassionate Christ!”

Tone 8 Kontakion (Pascha)
Thou didst descend into the tomb, O Immortal,
Thou didst destroy the power of death.
In victory Thou didst arise, O Christ God,
proclaiming, “Rejoice!” to the Myrrhbearing Women,//
granting peace to Thine Apostles, and bestowing
Resurrection on the fallen.

Tone 1 Prokeimenon
Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us as we have set our hope on Thee!
(Ps 32/33:22)
v: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous! Praise befitteth the just! (Ps 32/33:1)

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

The Angel cried to the Lady, full of grace:
“Rejoice, O pure Virgin! Again, I say: Rejoice,
thy Son is risen from His three days in the tomb!
With Himself He has raised all the dead.”
Rejoice, O ye people!

Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem!
The glory of the Lord has shone on thee.
Exult now, and be glad, O Zion!
Be radiant, O pure Theotokos,
in the Resurrection of thy Son!

Holy Scripture:

Acts 9:32-42 (Epistle)

Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all parts of the country, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda. There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. And Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus the

Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed.” Then he arose immediately. So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord. At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring him not to delay in coming to them. Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them. But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, “Tabitha, arise.” And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. Then he gave her his hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord.

John 5:1-15 (Gospel)

After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, “Do you want to be made well?” The sick man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.” Jesus said to him, “Rise, take up your bed and walk.” And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath. The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, “It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed.” He answered them, “He who made me well said to me, ‘Take up your bed and walk.’” Then they asked him, “Who is the Man who said to you, ‘Take up your bed and walk’?” But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, “See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.” The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

Holy Words:

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 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...