There is an unchanging (stable) reality that abides throughout the whole of our existence. Often, it is possible for a friend to feel as though this reality has been misplaced or buried. Childhood, when it is innocent and largely undamaged, gives easy access to this reality—it is the soul. Among the more interesting experiences for a priest is the confession of children. The one thing I am certain to avoid is trying to teach children about sin when it is not part of their conscious existence. Convincing a child that there is an external parent (God) watching and judging their every thought and action is almost certain to create a certain distance from the soul itself. The question, “Am I ok?” is the language of shame, of broken communion, even communion with the soul. But, having done this now for 40 years, I can say that I see a gradual awakening in each child, an awareness of broken communion. The role of a confessor is not to widen that gap, but to help a child learn how it is bridged in Christ. I tell parents, “The only thing I want a child to know at first is the absolute certainty of God’s unchanging and unconditional love.” It is only in the context of such safety that, in time, an older adolescent can find the forgiveness and healing that they will inevitably need. If this is true of children, it is true for adults as well. If this is true of children, it is true for adults as well. When Adam and Eve hide, it is the closure of their nakedness that drives them away from God. This is shame. They are not hiding because they are afraid of God; they hide because they cannot bear their own nakedness. They have become alien to their own souls. And so, God, in His mercy, covers them. In confession we draw back the covering and dare to look towards our own soul. And (in Orthodox practice) we are then covered by the priest’s stole (epitrachelion) and drawn into communion with God as we hear the prayer of absolution. What do we see when we look within? We usually see sin, embarrassment, failure, loneliness. The pains are these things are certainly there, but not because they can see it through their own nakedness. They have become alien to their own souls. God, in His mercy, covers them. In communion we draw back the covering and dare to look towards our own soul. And (in Orthodox practice) we are then covered by the priest’s stole (epitrachelion) and drawn into communion with God as we hear the prayer of absolution.

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.
- 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 – Panahidka/Luncheon for Vern Baldwin – Luncheon to follow

Wed. May 29th – Akathist – 6pm

Holy Ascension of the Lord – Thursday, June 6th Divine Liturgy Great Vespers Wed, June 5th 6pm (Dinner Following)

Holy Pentecost – Sunday June 16th

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

- Heirloom Garden Plants will be available God willing Next week. (Please make a donation for the plants, donations will go to the Edinboro food bank)
- Andrew Angelini Grad Party Sun. June 2nd 3-5pm Parish Hall
- Chicken Barbeque – with Halupki July 14th 12-3pm

In the story of the Prodigal Son, the young man falls into terrible sins and a wasteful life. However, we are told that “he came to himself” (Lk 15:17). This phrase makes it clear that he himself (his soul) is not to be identified with the terrible sins and a wasteful life. They are alien to him. In truth, he was fleeing from himself when he left the Father’s house. When he “comes to himself,” he returns to his true home.

In the Father’s embrace, there is only the true life (soul) of the young son. There is no recalling of his failings in the words of the Father. “This my son was dead (alienated from his soul), “but now he is alive.” And as he stands in the Father’s embrace, he perhaps sees the Father truly for the first time, now reflected in the mirror of his own soul.

This is salvation.

**Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church**

25636 N. Mosiertown Rd, Crossville, PA 1641

Archpriest Fr. Daniel Mathewson – Rector

V. Rev. David Smokey – Retired

**Lord’s Day** – 5-26-2019

Parish phone: 814-734-3801

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

**THE SAMARITAN WOMAN CHRIST IS RISEN!**


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


- Travelers, Military servers, Greg. Newly Deceased: Helen Miller, Anna Anderson, Rodney Seryo, Josephine Olvnik, Marilyn Filipos, Irene Hoovler… 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, Jean, Liam, Bill, Wesley, Zara, Kim, Jim, Margaret, Loren, Nick, Russell, Julia, Shelby, Janet, Mareen, Lynn, Jarrod, Zach.

**Tone 4**

Tropean (Repose)

When the women Disciples of the Lord learned from the Angel the joyous message of the Resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the Apostles: “Death is overthrown!”

Christ God is risen…/ granting the world great mercy!”

**Tone 8**

Tropean (Midfarest)
In the middle of the feast, O Savior, fill my thirsting soul with the waters of piety, as Thou didst cry to all: “If anyone thirst, let him come to Me and drink!” O Christ God, Fountain of our life, glory to Thee!

Tone 3 Kontakion (Pentecostarion)
The Samaritan Woman came to the well in faith, she saw Thee, the Water of wisdom and drank abundantly; She inherited the Kingdom on high, and is ever glorified!

Tone 4 Kontakion (Midfast)
Christ God, the Creator and Master of all, cried to all in the midst of the feast of the Law: “Come and draw the water of immortality!” We fall before Thee and faithfully cry:// Grant us Thy mercies, for Thou art the Fount of all, and drink!” (Ps 46/47:6)

Holy Scripture:
Acts 11:19
Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Pheœnícia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. Then news of these things came to the ears of the church that was at Jerusalem. And they sent Barnabas to make known these gifts of the Lord. So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

Then they went out of the city and came to Him. In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” But He said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.” Therefore the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?” Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. Do you not say, ‘There is still four months and then the harvest!’ Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’”

Holy Words:
The soul is a difficult thing to speak (or write) about. First, the word is used so commonly and widely that its true meaning becomes obscured. Second, the soul is largely unknown to each of us, despite its primary importance. So, I will begin by giving its simple meaning: the soul is our life. When we hear the story of Adam’s creation we learn that he is fashioned out of the earth. Then, God breathes into him, “and he became a living soul.” The soul is the life (there are no dead souls), and it is a gift from God, the “Lord and Giver of Life.”

There is, of course, what we could call the “bosis” of our existence – the mere fact of our biological life. But this alone does not constitute what is meant by “soul.” The soul is not only our life – it is our true life – our authentic existence. It is this authentic existence that is largely hidden from us. It is covered so by much that shapes our experience: pain, suffering, shame, dark intentions, fear, etc. In fact, much that we describe as our “existence” is little more than the effects of our experiences, passions, and the way we shape and energize the passions (or our various desires). Here is a short description of St. Gregory of Nyssa’s thought on this point:

The journey towards salvation is marked by a successive elimination of all that we “have,” in order to reach what we “are.” The safest path and surest refuge is not to be deluded and fail to recognize ourselves – who we truly are. We should not believe that we are seeing our Selves when we are only seeing something that surrounds us – our body, our senses, the idea that others have of us.

For anything unstable [that changes] is not us. The soul is purified in this way, as she lays aside garment after garment. So, the ideal [salvation] will appear as that supreme instant wherein the soul, having laid aside all of her “corporeal” veils, presents herself naked and pure in spirit to the vision of God in a divine vigil. (from Presence and Thought: An Essay on the