

NEWS and NOTICES

+TODAY Mens' Fellowship Chicken Dinner following Divine Liturgy- (Please wait for Fr. Daniel) All donations go to the Fellowship for service to the parish.

+Moms Group to meet Friday Sept. 22nd 10:00am-12noon

+Missions Team Tuesday, Sept. 26th – Rachocki's 5:30p

+The Newly Illumined *Kati*

McCrone will wed in holy marriage *Andrew Sawyer*

here at our parish next

Sunday, Sept. 24th, 2017. The

Marriage service will be part

of the Divine Liturgy. There

will be a reception to follow in the hall with a dinner, cake, and dancing!



"PEACEFUL ENDINGS" A Workshop about

preparing for our repose **Saturday**

September 30th from 1pm-6pm . Please

RSVP to Dr. Kayta Hill if you will be attending.

OUR FALL ORTHODOX RETREAT

OCTOBER 7th-8th

The retreat begins at 10 am on Saturday ending with vespers and a bond fire in the evening. Sunday,

Divine Liturgy, and a final session for our education time following lunch. We are blessed to have a

special guest presenter for the weekend: Fr. Dcn.

Saed (Pronounced "Sod") Rihini from Chicago. He is dynamic in his presentations, and is known for

keeping his audience entertained, and enlightened at the same time!

LIVES OF THE SAINTS...

The Holy Martyrs Saint Sophia and her Daughters

Faith, Hope and Love were born in Italy. Their mother was a pious Christian widow who named her daughters for the three Christian virtues. Faith was twelve, Hope was ten, and Love was nine. Saint Sophia raised them in the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. Saint Sophia and her daughters did not hide their faith in Christ, but openly confessed it before everyone.



An official named Antiochus denounced them to the emperor Hadrian (117-138), who ordered that they be brought to Rome. Realizing that they would be taken before the emperor, the holy virgins prayed fervently to the Lord Jesus Christ, asking that He give them the strength not to fear torture and death. When the holy virgins and their mother came before the emperor, everyone present was amazed at their composure. They looked as though they had been brought to some happy festival, rather than to torture. Summoning each of the sisters in turn, Hadrian urged them to offer sacrifice to the goddess Artemis. The young girls remained unyielding.

Then the emperor ordered them to be tortured. They burned the holy virgins over an iron grating, then threw them into a red-hot oven, and finally into a cauldron with boiling tar, but the Lord preserved them. The youngest child, Love, was tied to a wheel and they beat her with rods until her body was covered all over with bloody welts. After undergoing unspeakable torments, the holy virgins glorified their Heavenly Bridegroom and remained steadfast in the Faith.

They subjected Saint Sophia to another grievous torture: the mother was forced to watch the suffering of her daughters. She displayed adamant courage, and urged her daughters to endure their torments for the sake of the Heavenly Bridegroom. All three maidens were beheaded, and joyfully bent their necks beneath the sword.

In order to intensify Saint Sophia's inner suffering, the emperor permitted her to take the bodies of her daughters. She placed their remains in coffins and loaded them on a wagon. She drove beyond the city limits and reverently buried them on a high hill. Saint Sophia sat there by the graves of her daughters for three days, and finally she gave up her soul to the Lord. Even though she did not suffer for Christ in the flesh, she was not deprived of a martyr's crown. Instead, she suffered in her heart. Believers buried her body there beside her daughters.

The relics of the holy martyrs have rested at El'zasa, in the church of Esho since the year 77

Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

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Crossingville, PA 1641 Rev. Fr. Daniel

Mathewson – *Rector Lord's Day –*

September 17th, 2017 Parish phone:

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www.orthodoxcrossingville.org or on Face book: Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church



Glory to Jesus Christ!

15th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 6. Afterfeast of the Elevation of the Cross. Sunday after Elevation. Martyr Sophia, and her three daughters: Faith (Vera), Hope (Nadézhdá), and Love (Liubóv', Charity), at Rome (ca. 137). Martyrs Theodota at Nicæa (ca. 230). Martyr Agathocleia (ca. 230). 156 Martyrs of Palestine, including Bishop Peleus and Nilus, the Presbyter, Zeno, the Noblemen Paternuthius and Elias, and others (ca. 310).

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

Those in need –, Fr. Andrew, Fr. David, Mat. Donna, Fr. John, Fr. Nicholas, Fr. Paul, Fr. George, Mat. Suzanne, Drew, Helene, Karen, Mary, Marie, Judy, Richard, William, Theona, Sara, Joel, Evan, Eugene, John S., David, Sean, John, Theona, James, David, Kathleen, Thomas, Timothy, Paul, George, Valentina, Peter, Jeremiah, James, Renee, Delani, Emily, George, Tanya **The Homebound...** Vincent, Tanya, Mary-Louise, Helen, John, Irene, Ruth, Josephine, Ann, William, Claudia ... **Newly Illumined** Katherine (Kati), Joseph... **Catechumens -Inquirers** Christian **Newly Married-** Joseph and Elizabeth **Our Missionaries Abroad...**Fr. David and Mt. Rozanne, **Military servers...**Greg ... **All effected by hurricanes ...Departed Orthodox...**Newly Departed – Katherine. Vernon, Paul, James, Andrew, Peter, Paul, Margaret, Michael Mary Ann, Timothy **special requests...** Ian, Paul, Daleen, Penni, James... people in the south and Texas...Mexico

Scripture Readings:

Galatians 2:16-20 (Epistle, Sunday After)

knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me

2 Corinthians 4:6-15 (Epistle)

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed – always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you.

And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak, knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

Mark 8:34-9:1 (Gospel, Sunday After)

When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For

whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power."

Matthew 22:35-46 (Gospel)

Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "The Son of David." He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: 'The LORD said to my Lord, sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool'? If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?" And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

The Tree Heals the Tree

Readers of the New Testament are familiar with St. Paul's description of Christ as the "Second Adam." It is an example of the frequent Apostolic use of an allegoric reading of the Old Testament (I am using "allegory" in its broadest sense – including typology and other forms). Christ Himself had stated that *He* was the meaning of the Old Testament (John 5:39). Within the Gospels Christ identifies His own death and resurrection with the Prophet Jonah's journey in the belly of the fish. He likens His crucifixion to the serpent raised on a staff by which Moses healed the people of Israel. Without the allegorical use of the Old Testament – much of the material in the gospels and the rest of the New Testament would be unintelligible.

Orthodox Christians are very accustomed to this manner of handling Scripture – the hymnography (largely



written during the Patristic period) of the Church's liturgical life is utterly permeated by such a use of allegory. The connections between New Testament and Old – between dogma and the allegory of Scriptural imagery is found in almost every verse offered within a service. Those who are not familiar with the Eastern liturgical life are unaware of this rich Christian heritage and of its deep doctrinal piety and significance.

In the Feast of the Holy Cross, the hymnography at one point makes the statement, "The Tree heals the Tree." It is one of the marvelous commentaries on the life of grace and its relationship to the human predicament. It refers to the relationship between the Cross of Christ and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The latter was the source of the fruit that Adam and Eve consumed that was the source of their fall from grace. The "Tree that heals" is none other than the Cross of Christ.

I am struck particularly by this treatment of Biblical imagery. The meditation does not say that the Cross *destroys* the tree whose fruit, along with our disobedience, brought the human tragedy. The Tree *heals* the Tree. In the same manner, the Kingdom of God does not destroy creation – it makes it whole.

There is a tendency within our lives to view failure and disasters (whether self-inflicted or otherwise) as deep tragedies that derail our lives and the world around us. Our heart becomes confused when the thought of "if only" takes up residence. But the Tree heals the Tree. In God, nothing is wasted.

It is the spiritual habit of the Church's liturgical life to see the story of Christ in everything. Every story involving wood or a tree seems to find its way into the hymnography of the Cross. The same is true for many other images. I believe this way of reading Scripture is also a key to the Christian life. Our hearts are such that they generally do not see the Kingdom of God – we see only the tree and our disobedience. But Christ Himself became sin that we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21). He took our life upon Himself that He might bestow His own life upon us. Thus Christ has entered all things that He might make all things new. Nothing is wasted. --Fr. SF