

WEEKLY BULLETIN

Sunday, June 24, 2018

Apostle Bartholomew

Epistle: Romans 5:1-10 * Gospel: St. Matthew 6:22-33



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
Orthodox Church

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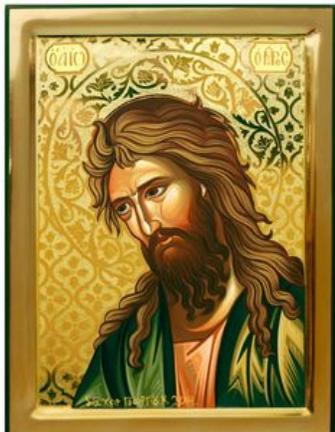
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An Orthodox Christian
community of the American
Carpatho-Russian Orthodox
Diocese of the USA under the
protection of the Ecumenical
Patriarchate of
Constantinople.

WELCOME!



SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY DIVINE SERVICES

SUNDAY, JUNE 24

9:00AM Sunday Divine Liturgy.

SUNDAY, JULY 01

9:00AM Sunday Divine Liturgy with a Panachida in Memory of +Rose Fenenic and +George Smisko, offered by Patty Barbara Stack.

SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY PARISH ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY, JUNE 24

10:30AM Summer Coffee Social Hour.
Parish Council Meeting — All Officers are to attend

MONDAY, JUNE 25

5:00PM Weekly Soup Kitchen Service - *Come lend a hand!*

SUNDAY, JULY 01

10:30AM Summer Coffee Social Hour.
Fr. Michael and Parish Youth leave for the Altar Boy Retreat & Women's Enc.

COFFEE CLUB HELP WANTED! We are reaching out to additional parishioners who are interested in serving on the coffee club rotation throughout the school year in addition to the PTO parents. Your responsibility would be for one Sunday in the rotation and the PTO supplies all the essential items. You are responsible for the food that day. Please see Fr. Michael or sign up in the vestibule as we put together the schedule beginning in September!



CHANGE THE WORLD

Help our JR ACRY To do some wonderful things and make some positive changes in our community

and in the world. Whether it's mission work here in the US or abroad, wherever the calling is, whatever the task may be - you can help! A water cooler bottle has been placed in the vestibule and we want to fill it with change - pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters, silver dollars, 1's, 5's, 10's, 20's, 50's, 100's - whatever! Just fill it!

When the jar is filled, it will be counted and the kids will decide how they want to use it. Could be something small, could be something big - we just don't know. All we know is, there is a ton of work to do and you can help!

OUR GOAL IS TO FILL THAT JAR BY THE END OF AUGUST!

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS: As the summer is in full swing we are reminding our parishioners to keep current on their financial obligations to the church. If you are going away for an extended period, please 'double up' on your envelopes before you leave or mail them to the rectory and they will be taken care of. If you are interested in learning how to have your contributions submitted directly and automatically from your bank to the church (so you never forget ever!), please see Fr. Michael and he will give you that information. We are grateful for the support of all our parishioners!

PRAYER LIST

Pat Overdorf, Fr. Michael Psenechnuk, LCPL Michael Delcher, Janice Seniakevich, Bill Kobasz, Marian Fryc, Jacob Cochran, Kelly Peterson, Marie Pirigyi, Lilly Perry, Nino Krataschvili, Sue Shevchenko, John DiBiasi, Craig Chapman, Helen Hrehowsik, Michele Camisa, Dolores Matyola, Fr. John Gido, Patricia Yurcisin, Betty Short, Irene Yacina, Carol Kondor, Lisa Buckley, Angel Abigail Billy, Angel Joseph Santalla, Dorothy Szczecina, Olga Medvigy, Olga Beyer, Carol Rezes, Sussi Howard, Amanda Orender, Eleanor Dussling, Helen Deliman, Melanie McHenry, Peggy Patrick, Oleg Alber, Maxine Vigilante, Marian Fryc, Lillian Kalog, Maryann Della Serra, Mary Stumpf, Olga Beyer, John Popadin, Victoria Dean, Joyce Nimetz, Stephen Skasko, Helen J. Dunham, Natalie McHenry, George Kratsashvili, John Paul Hall, Veronica Houser, Edward Sierzega, Fr. John Baranik, Joshua Skoog, Joan Winters, Michael Ascher, Sgt. Jessica Pak, Smn. Daniel Langner, Lnc. Cpl. Matthew Fetchina, US Armed Forces and the unborn children of this world, more vocations to the Holy Priesthood. *May the Divine Physician of souls and bodies touch them all! Amen!*

New York – New Jersey Orthodox Youth Mission Team
STOCK SHARES ORDER FORM

INVESTOR INFORMATION

Full Name _____

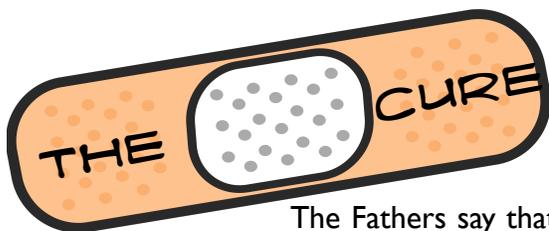
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for Despair is Hope

The Fathers say that despair is a great danger to spiritual life. Once you fall into it, it is very difficult to climb out. It frequently comes up in confession, and as a spiritual advisor, it is one of the most difficult spiritual states to cure. The Fathers called it “acedia.” (Pronounced “ah **see** dee ah”) Today, we call this passion “despair.”

How does this passion work in us? The first temptation is disappointment -we feel with certainty that nothing has gone as we wanted. The second temptation is irritation and anger- we wonder why has God done this to me? Disappointment comes upon us and turns to a sorrow that deepens into despair. This entire process is fueled by an inner voice that says, “I deserved better. If God really loved me, he would not have let this happen.” Profound sadness convinces us that there is no hope. When hope is gone, there is only despair.

I have rarely met anyone who, once they came to know Orthodoxy fully, abandoned it because their theological studies proved the Faith to be wrong. However, I have known Orthodox people who have lost their faith in God because they felt cheated of the things that they had wanted. In their despair, they quit their spiritual disciplines and soon the light of faith and hope was gone, and they left the church

Obviously, the cure for despair is hope. Hope and despair cannot exist in the same space. Yet, you might protest: “How can I have hope? After all, I’ve been profoundly disappointed and how can I believe that it will be any different in the future? Hope, like all things important, is something that is gain and not simply given to us.

We all experience disappointment, tribulation, tragedy, and loss. No one is exempt. We are like the Three Children who stand in the midst of the hot fire. The Bible says that when they came out of the fire “not a hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.” How is it possible to go through such tribulation and not even smell like the smoke of bitterness?

St. Paul who experienced all of these things, tells us how these difficult life experiences can be transformed. Above all else, we must understand the power of our salvation. Grace brings us peace with God, and it is this grace that transforms our life experiences. St. Paul even says that because of this grace, we glory in our tribulations. How can anyone glory in disappointment, tribulation, tragedy, and loss?

Glory and joy are possible because Grace can transform these bad life experiences so that they produce something quite valuable. Let’s follow St. Paul’s words carefully: “tribulation produces patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope.” With Grace, each difficult life experience produces something stronger until we finally obtain the prize of hope. This hope is not wishful thinking, but is the result of Grace transforming the difficulties of life. With hope, we know no shame and no despair because the love of God is shed into our hearts. Tribulations and tragedies will always come. The winds and waves of tribulation beat against everyone’s house. Will the house stand or fall? It all depends on the foundation of the house. If the foundation is hope then no wave or blast of wind will bring it down. We will know this hope if we realize that salvation is not just some state that we have attained. The grace of salvation is a transforming power that even turns the tragedies and tribulations of life into hope. With hope, nothing can prevail against us.

ARCHPRIEST JOHN MOSES

Pews are certainly not traditional. No Christians of any stripe used them prior to the Protestant Reformation. But you often do find Orthodox parishes that use pews today, in the United States and in other parts of the world in which Orthodox parishes were established, where surrounding heterodox Christians have long used them.

Protestants adopted pews, because they suited services that revolved around long sermons, and such services tended to not have much left in the way of the traditional aspects of Christian worship. But for most of Church history, such things were unheard of.

We see in Scripture that the normal attitude of prayer is standing. Christ said in the Gospels:

"And **when ye stand praying**, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" ([Mark 11:25](#)).

In the [parable of the Publican and Pharisee](#), we find that when they went to the Temple to pray, both the Publican and the Pharisee stood when they prayed:

"Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. **The Pharisee stood and prayed** thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give [tithes](#) of all that I possess. And **the publican, standing afar off**, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner" ([Luke 18:10-13](#)).

You also have references to bowing and kneeling in prayer ([1 Kings 8:54](#); [Daniel 6:10](#); [Acts 9:40](#); [Numbers 16:22](#)), but you don't find many references to people **sitting** during corporate worship. It is traditional to have seating along the walls of churches for those who are unable to stand throughout the service, but nothing like the pews we see in many churches today.

There are parishes even in the Russian Church Abroad that have pews. These tend to be older parishes that were established during either the pre-revolutionary period, or during the period of the American Metropolia prior to the post World War II wave of immigration (which is most typical of the older mainstream ROCOR parishes). This is due, I think, to the pressure to assimilate (which was even stronger during those periods than it is today). So obviously, the fact that such parishes exist, and continue to use pews would suggest that our bishops do not consider pews to be intolerable, but our bishops clearly do not encourage them either, which is why you don't see them in most of our parishes.

If you are in a parish that has had pews for generations, you probably are not going to get any where by opposing them, and so you would need to come to terms with them, if there were no better options to consider. But in a situation in which a parish is considering pews (or rows of chairs, that amount to the same thing), one should certainly express respectful opposition to the idea. However, if those in authority decide to put them in, continuing to oppose them would not be a very healthy position to be in... and so again, you would have to either come to accept the facts on the ground, or look elsewhere, if there were other options.

There is a difficult balance one has to strike with such things. We want to be traditional, but on the other hand, we do not want to be a source of scandal or division in a parish. Obviously, there are some abnormalities that one could not possibly come to terms with, even to tolerate them for as long as one had no other parishes in the area to consider, but I would not put pews in that category.

Pews do tend to make the congregation feel like spectators in the services, rather than participants. On the other hand, because we live in a culture in which people are used to sitting through most of a service, there is a tendency in parishes that do not have pews for people to congregate along the walls, and thus not make full use of the worship space. One option I have seen that I think works pretty well, is the use of movable benches with no backs (they seat about 3 to four people, as I recall), that are placed in parts of the Nave of the Church. I observed this in the Old Rite parish in Erie, Pennsylvania, and in my opinion, it worked well, without the usual problems that pews bring, and I don't think I have seen a parish whose services were more pious than that parish.

On their website, they explain when people should sit on these pews: "Most Old Rite faithful try to arrive on time for the services. The benches located in the Church of the Nativity are placed there because the faithful usually arrive several minutes before services begin, thus, allowing them a place to sit before services commence. Also, it is still the practice of the Old Rite to read the liturgically-appointed homilies during Matins and/or Vigils. During the reading of these homilies the faithful sit and listened attentively. When the services do begin, the faithful stand with arms folded with as little shifting of feet and body as necessary." Because these benches have no backs, it is not very comfortable to sit in them throughout the services anyway. However, they still have benches along the walls for those who do need to sit throughout the services due to age or infirmity.