



The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

Sun, August 1, 2021: 6th Sunday after Holy Pentecost, Procession of the Honorable Wood of the Life-Giving Cross of the Lord



Hymns for Today's Service

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.

O Lord, save Your people, and bless Your inheritance! Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians over their adversaries; and by virtue of Your Cross, preserve Your habitation!

We beseech Thee, O Lover of mankind, to accept in supplication the suffering which the Saints endured for Thee, O Lord, and heal all our infirmities!

You descended into hell, O my Savior, shattering its gates as Almighty, resurrecting the dead as Creator, and destroying the sting of death. You have delivered Adam from the curse, O Lover of man, and we cry to You: "O Lord, save us!"

Seven pillars of the Wisdom of God and seven lampstands of the divine Light, all-wise Maccabees, greatest of the martyrs before the time of the martyrs, with them ask the God of all to save those who honor you!

As You were voluntarily raised upon the Cross for our sake, grant mercy to those who are called by Your Name, O Christ God; make all Orthodox Christians glad by Your power, granting them victories over their adversaries by bestowing on them the invincible trophy, Your weapon of peace!

Epistle Reading - Romans 10:1-10

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "The man who does those things shall live by them." But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, 'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the

DEAR GUESTS AND FRIENDS: A most sincere and heartfelt welcome to you from our community. According to the ancient traditions of the Orthodox Church, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is to be administered only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared to receive the Holy Sacrament through prayer and fasting. If you have questions please let us know!

word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Gospel Reading-Matthew 8:28-9:1

So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city. Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you." And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!" But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" – then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." And he arose and departed to his house. Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.

This Week's Schedule

THIS WEEKEND

SAT, July 31st: Vespers @ 5 PM

SUN, August 1st: Hours @ 8:40 AM, Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Parastas, Coffee Hour

++ Dormition Fast Begins Today ++
Aug 1st thru Aug 15th

Today's Parastas (8/1)

In Memory of Andrew Dutko & Magdalena Radziun

Offered by Irene Dutko & Family

In Memory of John Gurka, Mary DeBenedetto,

Nicholas & Julia Gurka

Joseph, Myron, Jean, Sophia, Stephen & Apolonia Shilo

Offered by William & Mary Gurka

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THIS WEEK

WED: Church Open for Private Prayer 11AM-1:30 PM

++ Feast of the Transfiguration ++

THURS, Aug 5: Great Vespers w/ Litya @ 6:30 PM

FRI, Aug 6: Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM

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NEXT WEEKEND

SAT, Aug 7th: Vespers @ 5 PM

SUN, Aug. 8th: Hour @ 8:50 AM, Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Coffee Hour, Orthodox Etiquette Presentation, Parish Council Meeting

Upcoming Parish Events & Announcements

Orthodox Etiquette Presentation Aug 8, 15, 22: Paul (Garret) Hamner, our parish's summer intern from St. Tikhon's, will offer 3 brief presentations on what and why we do the things we do in church and during our worship services. Each presentation will give us insight into the meaning behind Orthodox worship practices with time for questions and answers. Join us during coffee hour on Aug 8, 15 and 22 to gain a deeper understanding of our faith and worship.

Parish Council Meeting – Sun, Aug 8 @ 11:30 AM

Birthdays & Anniversaries

August Birthdays: Sophia Leonori (8/5), Olivia Dutko (8/22), Denise Meck (8/23), Ephraim Neal (8/25), Pat Bankos (8/?) **August Anniversaries:** Greg & Laura Polk (8/17), George & Rita Krill (8/?)

This Week Birthdays: Sophia Leonori (8/5)

PARISH PRAYER LIST Living: Cynthia Dulsky, Theodore & Elenor Sovryda, Nadine Breisch, Rosalie Bagenski, Sonja & Leanne Kay, Josie Bissett, Lisa & Scott Harvey, Daniel & Shannon Bissett, Delores Karas, Antonette Terry, Archpriest Daniel & Matushka Myra Kovalak, Violet Filipi, Catherine, Danny Gobish, Lorraine Pace, Camden Thomas, Peter Holoviak & Family, Marni Bachman & Family, Rose Marie, Helen Gudaitis, Mahaffey Family, George Scott, Evelyn Kosmiski, Joe Sloan, Louis Gianuzzi, Betty Serafin, Matushka Elizabeth, Karen Maier, John and Mary Metz, Bill & Chris

Why a Fast for Dormition?

By Daniel Manzuk, antiochian.org



Every Orthodox Christian is aware and generally knows the reason behind the fasts for Pascha and Christmas. But while they may know of the Dormition Fast, few follow it, and more than a few question why it is there, neither knowing its purpose. First, given the pervasive misunderstanding of the purpose of fasting itself, a refresher on its purpose is always a good idea. There is a perception that we should fast when we want something, as though the act of fasting somehow appeases God, and seeing us “suffer” gets Him to grant our request. Nothing can be further from the truth. It is not our fasting that pleases God, it is the fruits of our fast (provided we fast in the proper mindset, and do not merely diet) that please Him. We fast, not to get what we want, but to prepare ourselves to receive what God wants to give us. The purpose of fasting is to bring us more in line with another Mary, the sister of Lazarus, and away from their sister Martha, who in the famous passage was “anxious and troubled about many things.” Fasting is intended to bring us to the realization of “the one thing needful.” It is to help us put God first and our own desires second, if not last. As such it serves to prepare us to be instruments of God’s will, as with Moses in his flight from Egypt and on Mt. Sinai, as well as our Lord’s fast in the wilderness. Fasting turns us away from ourselves and toward God. In essence it helps us become like the Theotokos, an obedient servant of God, who heard His word and kept it better than anyone else has or could.

So why do we fast before Dormition? In a close-knit family, word that its matriarch is on her deathbed brings normal life to a halt. Otherwise important things

(parties, TV, luxuries, personal desires) become unimportant; life comes to revolve around the dying matriarch. It is the same with the Orthodox family; word that our matriarch is on her deathbed, could not (or at least should not) have any different effect than the one just mentioned. The Church, through the Paraklesis Service, gives us the opportunity to come to that deathbed and eulogize and entreat the woman who bore God, the vessel of our salvation and our chief advocate at His divine throne. And as, in the earthly family, daily routines and the indulgence in personal wants should come to a halt. Fasting, in its full sense (abstaining from food and desires) accomplishes this. Less time in leisure or other pursuits leaves more time for prayer and reflection on she who gave us Christ, and became the first and greatest Christian. In reflecting on her and her incomparable life, we see a model Christian life, embodying Christ’s retort to the woman who stated that Mary was blessed because she bore Him: blessed rather are those who hear His word and keep it. Mary did this better than anyone. As Fr. Thomas Hopko has stated, she heard the word of God and kept it so well, that she of all women in history was chosen not only to hear His Word but give birth to it (Him). So while we fast in contemplation of her life, we are simultaneously preparing ourselves to live a life in imitation of her. That is the purpose of the Dormition Fast.

When the assumption of thine undefiled body was being prepared, the Apostles gazed on thy bed, viewing thee with trembling. Some contemplated thy body and were dazzled, but Peter cried out to thee in tears, saying, I see thee clearly, O Virgin, stretched out, O life of all, and I am astonished. O thou undefiled one, in whom the bliss of future life dwelt, beseech thy Son and God to preserve thy people unimpaired.

(Sticheron after the Gospel, Orthros)

Whoever Has Good Thoughts Sees Good in Everything

From the book **Spiritual Struggle**
by St. Paisios the Athonite

Some people tell me that they are scandalised because they see many things wrong in the Church. I tell them

that if you ask a fly, "Are there any flowers in this area?" it will say, "I don't know about flowers, but over there in that heap of rubbish you can find all the filth you want." And it will go on to list all the unclean things it has been to. Now, if you ask a honeybee, "Have you seen any unclean things in this area?", it will reply, "Unclean things? No, I have not seen any; the place here is full of the most fragrant flowers." And it will go on to name all the flowers of the garden or the meadow. You see, the fly only knows where the unclean things are, while the honeybee knows where the beautiful iris or the hyacinth is...

As I have come to understand, some people resemble the honeybee and some resemble the fly. Those who resemble the fly seek to find evil in every circumstance and are preoccupied with it; they see no good anywhere. But those who resemble the honeybee only see the good in everything they see. The stupid person thinks stupidly and takes everything in the wrong way, whereas the person who has good thoughts, no matter what he sees, no matter what you tell him, maintains a positive and good thought.

Once a high school student came to my home and knocked on the metal knocker on the door. Even though I was reading a stack of letters at the time, I decided to go and see what he wanted. "What is it you want, my son?" I asked. "Is this the home of Father Paisios?" he asked me, adding, "I want to see Father Paisios." "This is his home, but he's not here; he went to buy cigarettes," I told him. "It looks like he must have gone to help someone," he responded with a good thought. "He went to buy the cigarettes for himself," I told him. "He smoked them all and was desperate for a cigarette. He left me here alone, and I don't know when he'll be back. If he takes too long, I'll just leave." The student's watery eyes gave away his emotion and again he said with a good thought, "We torment Father Paisios..." "Why do you want to see him?" I asked. "I just want to receive his blessing," he said. "What blessing do you expect to receive from him, you fool! He's deluded; I know him well. There's no Grace in him. Don't waste your time waiting for him to return. He'll be grouchy; he may even be drunk, because he drinks, too." In spite of all this, the young man was still having good thoughts. Finally, I told him, "I will wait for him a little longer, what do you want me to tell him?" "I have a letter to give him," he said, "but I will wait so I can also receive his blessing." You see? No matter what negative things I related, he took them all with a good

thought. When I told him about the need for cigarettes, his eyes began to well up with tears. "Who knows," he thought, "he must have gone to help someone." Other people are well-educated and read a great deal, but they still don't have the good thoughts of that young student! You demolish his thought, and he immediately creates a better thought and draws an even better conclusion. I marvelled at him! It was the first time I saw such a thing!

