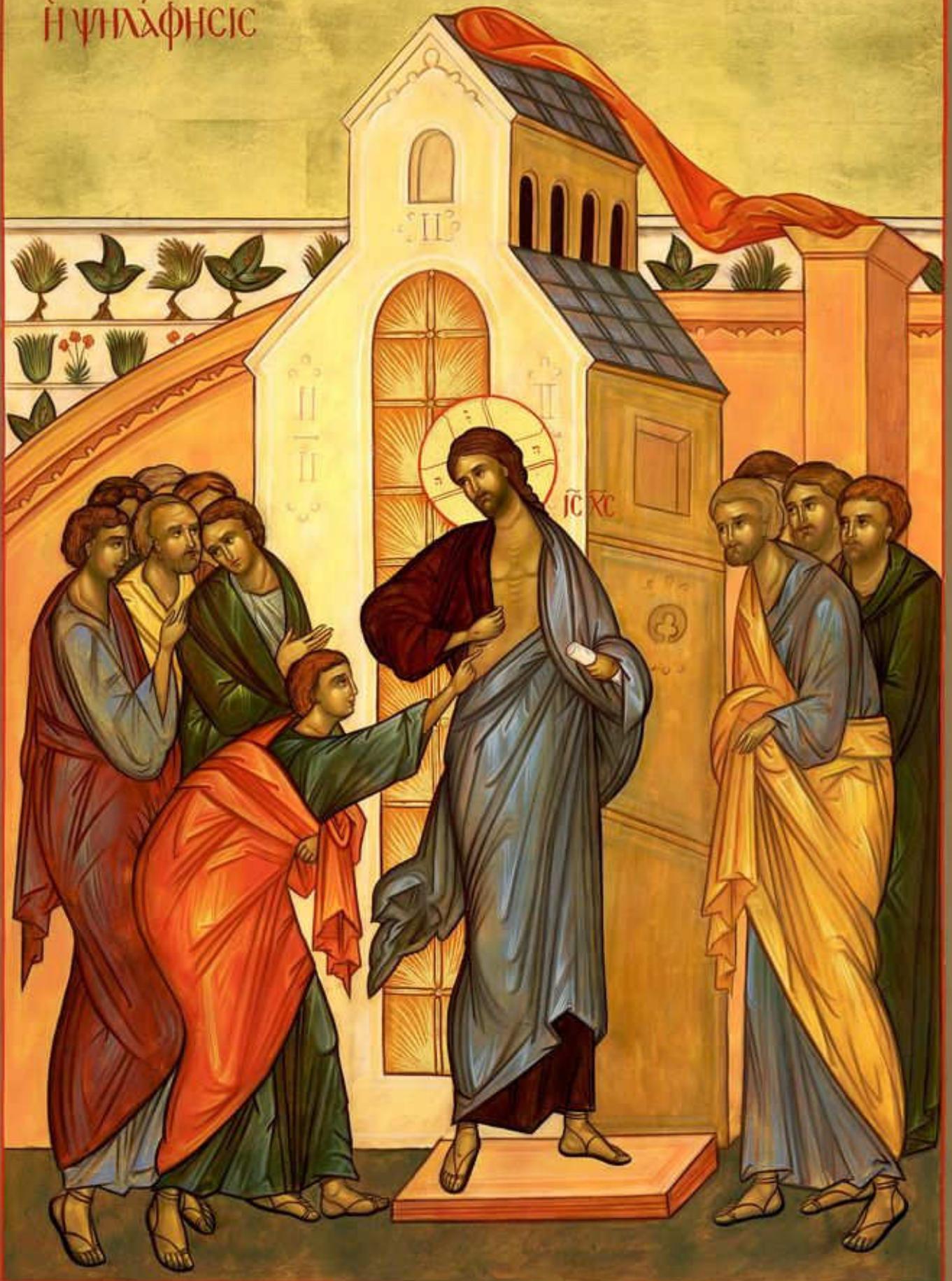
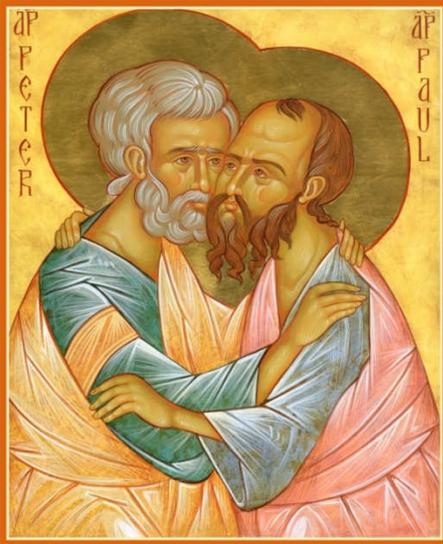


Ἡ ΨΗΛΑΦΗΣΙΣ





St. Peter & St. Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church

220 Mansfield Blvd. (mailing: PO Box 835), Carnegie, PA 15106

Rev. Fr. John Charest

847-910-7120 - frjohn.charest@aol.com

Deacon Evan O'Neil

Parish Hall: 412- 276-9718

President: Howard West 724-910-9627

www.orthodoxcarnegie.org

APRIL 26 , 2020

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SUNDAY, APRIL 26

DIVINE LITURGY 9:30 AM, TONE 1

ST THOMAS SUNDAY

ACTS 5:12-20; JN. 20:19-31

SATURDAY, MAY 2

VESPERS 6:00 PM

SUNDAY, MAY 3

DIVINE LITURGY 9:30 AM, TONE 2

SUNDAY OF THE MYRRH BEARERS

ACTS :8 - 7:5; JN. 4: 46-54

ALL SERVICE LIVE STREAMED AT:

<https://www.orthodoxcarnegie.org/divineliturgy>

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**The Sts. Peter & Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church Bulletin is published weekly by
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Editor: Michael Kapeluck

Bulletin Submissions are due by 8:00 am Thursday morning. Written submissions can be:

-hand delivered to the editor

-placed in the Bulletin envelope in the church vestibule.

-mailed to: 300 East Main Street, Carnegie, PA 15106

-e-mailed to: kapeluck@verizon.net

We welcome you today

We would like to remind our visitors of the following;:

- ❖ All people are encouraged to participate in the sacred services of our Church. We hope that you will be able to worship as well as have fellowship with us. Should you wish any information about the Orthodox Faith or this parish in particular, please see the rector or any member of the church. We are able to place you on our mailing list.
- ❖ Only Orthodox Christians may receive the Eucharist (Holy Communion) in the Orthodox Church. In like manner, Orthodox Christians may not receive the sacraments in a non-Orthodox Church. While we hope that one day all Christians will find unity and be able to approach the chalice of our Lord together, we observe the teachings of the Church that the Eucharist is a gift of unity and not a means of unity.

We remind our faithful and visitors of the following guidelines concerning the Holy Sacraments in the Orthodox Church.

- ❖ Orthodox Christians are urged to receive Holy Communion frequently.
- ❖ Communicants should be at peace with others before approaching the chalice (Mt 5:23-24)
- ❖ Realize the importance of making a thorough examination of sins and transgressions against God, ourselves and others and having prayed for forgiveness before coming to Holy Communion.
- ❖ Frequent communicants should come to Holy Confession at least four times a year (during the four fasting periods of the year). and additionally when an examination of conscience reveals the necessity to do so in order to heal any sinful behavior.
- ❖ Communicants should fast from all foods and liquids from the evening before receiving Holy Communion.
- ❖ Communicants should read prayers in preparation for receiving Holy Communion.
- ❖ All Orthodox Christians must receive the sacraments at least once a year.
- ❖ Those who are late for Divine Liturgy (after the reading of the Epistle and Gospel) should not approach the chalice.
- ❖ Those who are ill or who have special physical needs are exempt from the above guidelines.
- ❖ Infants and children (up to the age of seven) who are Orthodox Christians may receive Holy Communion and are exempt from the above guidelines.

Thank you for gathering to worship with us today. Together we have glorified the One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. May we be brought closer to one another and closer to God by following the eternal teachings of our Lord.

Нагадуємо нашнім гостям., що:

ми заохочуємо всіх до участі у Священній Літургії в нашій Церкві; ми сподіваємося, що Ви зможете не лише молитися тут, але й стати членом нашої громади. Якщо Ви хочете отримати якусь додаткову інформацію про Православну віру, чи, зокрема, про нашу парафію, звертайтеся, будь ласка, до отця настоятеля чи до будь-кого із членів нашої парафії. Ми можемо внести вашу адресу до парафіяльного списку розписки;

лише православні християни можуть отримати Євхаристію (Святе Причастя) у православної церкви і, відповідно, православні християни не можуть отримувати святого причастя у неправославної церкві Плекаючи надію на те, що у майбутньому всі християни досягнуть єдності і зможуть разом пити із чаші нашого Господа, ми дотримуємося вчення церкви про те, що Євхаристія - це дар єдності, а не засіб до єдності.

НАГАДУЄМО НАШИМ ВІРНИМ І ГОСТЯМ ПРО ПРАВИЛА, ЩО СТОСУЮТЬСЯ СВЯТОГО ПРИЧАСТЯ У ПРАВОСЛАВНІЙ ЦЕРКВІ:

ми спонукаємо православних християн часто ходити до Святого Причастя;

ті, хто причащаються, повинні бути у мирі з іншими перш, нас підійти до євхаристичної чаші (Св.Матвій 5:23-24);

перед тим, як прийти на Святе Причастя, дуже важливо ретельно осмислити гріхи і порушення, які було вчинено проти Бога, нас самих та інших і помолитися за їх відпущення;

тим, хто часто причащається, слід приходити на святу сповідь принаймні чотири рази на рік (під час кожного із чотирьох щорічних постів);

ті, хто причащається, повинні з вечора перед прийняттям Святого Причастя, припинити вживання всякої їжі і напоїв;

ті, хто причащається, повинні шляхом молитов підготувати себе до прийняття причастя;

всі православні християни повинні, принаймні, раз на рік отримати Святе Причастя;

ті, хто спізнився на Божественну Літургію (пришов після того, як було прочитано Апостол і Євангеліє) не можуть підходити до чаші; **хворі**, і ті, хто має обмежені фізичні м'якості, звільняються від вище викладених вимог;

немовлята та діти до семи років, які належать до Православної християнської віри, можуть отримувати Святе Причастя і звільняються від вище викладених вимог;

Дякуємо за те, що Ви прийшли помолитися з нами сьогодні у церкві Ісуса Христа. Разом з вами ми віддали славу Єдиному Господу, Отцеві, і Синові, і Духові Святому. Нехай дотримання вічного вчення нашого Господа наблизить нас один до одного Богу

Sunday of St. Thomas

TROPAR FOR ST THOMAS SUNDAY

From the sealed tomb, Thou didst shine forth, O life! Through closed doors Thou didst come to Thy disciples, O Christ God! Renew in us, through them, an upright spirit, by Thy mercy, O Resurrection of all!

KONDAK FOR ST THOMAS SUNDAY

Thomas touched Thy life-giving side with an eager hand, O Christ God, when Thou didst come to Thy apostles through closed doors. He cried out with all: Thou art my Lord and my God!

PROKIEMON

Great is our Lord, and abundant in power! His understanding is beyond measure!

v: Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God!

Lesson from the Acts of the Apostles

(c. 5, v. 12-20)

In those days, the Apostles performed many miracles and wonders among the people. They all used to assemble together in Solomon's Porch. None of the others dared to associate with them, but the people held them in high honor. Men and women in increasing numbers believed in the Lord and joined them.

They even carried the sick out into the streets and placed them on beds and mats to have at least Peter's shade fall on some of them, as he went by. Crowds also flocked together from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing sick persons and those, who were troubled by unclean spirits. All of them were healed.

But the high priest and his followers, who belonged to the sect of the Sadducees, were aroused and filled with jealousy. So, they arrested the Apostles and put them in the public jail. But an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors by night, led them out, and said to them: "Go, stand up in the temple, and preach to the people all the doctrines of the new way of life."

Дії 5:12-20

Багато знамень і чудес були зроблені руками апостолів серед людей. Усі віруючі зібралися разом на Соломоновому ганку, маючи спільну мету. Ніхто інший не наважувався пристати до їхнього гурту, але люди прославляли їх. І все більше й більше віруючих додавалося до Господа, як чоловіків, так і жінок. Зрештою люди почали виносити своїх хворих просто на вулиці. Ті, які лежали на ліжках або на постелях сподівалися, що коли Петро йтиме вулицею, то бодай тінь його впаде на когось із них.

Цілі юрби людей приходили до Єрусалиму з довколишніх міст і сіл. Вони також приносили своїх хворих чи одержимих нечистими духами і всі зцілювалися.

Тоді первосвященик і ті, хто був з ним, тобто саддукеї, сповнилися заздрощів. Вони схопили апостолів і кинули їх до громадської в'язниці. Але вночі Ангел Господній відчинив двері в'язниці, і вивів апостолів на волю, сказавши їм: «Ідіть, станьте у Храмі й усе розкажіть людям про нове життя».



Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! Tone 8

v: Come, let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to God our Savior! (Ps 94/95:1)

v: For the Lord is a great God, and a great King over all the earth. (Ps 94/95:3).

Gospel According to Saint John

(c. 20, v. 19-31)

On the evening of that first day of the week, though the doors where the Disciples were assembled had been locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came in, stood in their midst, and said to them: "Peace unto you." After these words he showed them his hands and his side. The Disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

Then Jesus said to them again: "Peace unto you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you also." Thereupon he breathed on them and said: "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whatever sins you forgive, they are forgiven; whatever sins you retain, they are retained."

Now Thomas, one of the twelve Apostles called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. Therefore the other Disciples told him: "We have seen the Lord." But he answered them: "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, put my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe."

Eight days later the Disciples were indoors again, and Thomas was with them this time. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came in again, stood in their midst, and said to them: "Peace unto you."

Then he said to Thomas: "Put your finger here, and look at my hands; place your hand in my side, and do not be unbelieving but believing."

Thomas answered: "My Lord and my God I" Jesus said to him: "You believe now, because you have seen me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."

Many other miracles performed by Jesus in the presence of his Disciples, are not to be found in this Book. But these few miracles have been recorded because they will help you to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and this belief will enable you to find life in his name.

Від Івана 20:19-31

Увечері того ж першого дня тижня зібралися Ісусові учні. Вони надійно замкнули за собою двері через страх перед юдеями. Раптом увійшов Ісус й став між ними, сказавши: «Мир вам!» Промовляючи це, Він показував їм руки і Свій бік. Учні були раді бачити Господа. Тоді Ісус знову сказав їм: «Мир вам! Як Отець Мене послав, так і Я посилаю вас». Мовивши так, він дихнув на них і сказав: «Прийміть Дух Святий. Гріхи людські, які ви прощатимете, буде людям відпущено. Ті ж гріхи, що не прощатимете, не буде відпущено».

Хоми, одного з дванадцятьох учнів, якого ще звали Близнюком, не було разом з усіма, коли приходив Ісус. Тож інші учні сказали йому: «Ми бачили Господа!» А Хома їм відповідає: «Доки не побачу слідів від цвяхів на Його руках, не вкладу своїх пальців туди й не вкладу руки своєї в рану, що в Його боці, не повірю!»

Через тиждень Ісусові учні знову були в домі, і Хома був серед них. Хоча двері й були зачинені, як і першого разу, Ісус увійшов, і ставши перед ними, мовив: «Мир вам!» Тоді звернувся до Хоми: «Вклади свого пальця сюди. Подивись на Мої руки. Простягни руку і вклади її до рани у Моєму боці. Перестань сумніватися й повір». І відповів йому Хома: «Мій Господи й Мій Боже!» Тоді Ісус сказав йому: «Ти повірив, бо побачив Мене. Та блаженні ті, хто не бачили, та повірили».

Ісус здійснив іще багато інших чудес у присутності Своїх учнів, про які не написано в цій книзі. Та все це написано, щоб ви могли повірити, що Ісус є Христос, Син Божий, і щоб, повіривши, здобули життя в Його ім'я.

Prayer List

Heavenly Father, Who sent Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to be the Physician of our souls and bodies, Who came to heal sickness and infirmity, Who healed the paralytic, and brought back to life the daughter of Jairus, Who healed the woman who had been sick for twelve years by the her mere touch of the hem of your robe, visit and heal also your beloved servants:

Fr. Paisius McGrath	Catharine Livak	Pamela Graham	Reggie Warford	Jane Allred
Fr. Mykola Dilendorf	Sharon Welsh	Peter Zinski	Pearl Homyrda	Kathryn Ostaffy
Fr. Victor Wronski	James Horowitz	Stephen Sheptak	Richard Beighy	Sally T.
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Deborah Schricker	Jack Schricker	Lynda West	Claudia Losego	Ben Cramer
Tetiana Kozak	Willie Haluszcza	Pat Dorning	Jackson Janosek	Athena Mycyk
Jennifer Marley	Cynthia Mycyk	Yaroslava Dhzyrha	Donna Forbes	Teresa Stacy
Jason Bell	MaryAnn Sklaryk	Esta Peyton	Natalia Mahalay	Carl H.
Sarah Winn	Baby Sean	Mary Lou Bender	Andrew Civetini	

by the power and grace of Your Christ. Grant them the patience that comes from believing that You are always at work in our lives to bring good out of evil. Grant them strength of body, mind and soul. Raise them up from the bed of pain. Grant them full recovery. May they experience the same surge of healing power flow through their bodies ,as did the sick woman who touched your robe. For we, too, are touching your robe today, dear Lord, through this our prayer. We approach you with the same faith she did. Grant them the gift of health. For You alone are the source of healing and to You we offer glory, praise and thanksgiving in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen

Mnohaya Lita - Many Blessed Years

Names Days

Sunday after Pascha, Apostle Thomas

Tom Sally

April 28 St. Basillisa

Regina Popichak

April 29 Martyr Leonidas of Corinth –

Leonid Aleksandrov

Anniversaries

April 28 Michael & Joanne Klein

April 30 David & Connie Markiw

Birthdays

April 30 Cindy Mycyk

Feast Days of:

Pray for our friends and relatives serving in the armed forces.

Patrick Kluyber, Catherine Sheerin, Gregory Markiw, Ethan Rock, Michael Hrishenko, John Howe

Pray for our Catechumens

John Barth

Pray for our parishioners in vocational studies

Deacon Evan O'Neil, Sue Leis



- **PRAYER PALS:** In light of the Coronavirus and not being able to attend Pascha services, we are asking all of you who have been praying for their Prayer Pal to continue to do so until this is over. Once we are able to go back to attending our physical church, we can greet our Prayer Pal with a small token and let them know that we were praying for them all during this pandemic

O Lord, God Almighty, Who had ordered, by Thy servant Moses, the vestments of the high priest, priestly and Levitical, and those various decorations in comeliness and beauty of the temple and Your sanctuary; mercifully hear now our entreaty...

(taken from the service to bless vestments)

Our parish will be purchasing new vestments for those who serve and will serve in the altar. The current vestments that the altar servers wear are about 50 years old. While they were taken care of very well, it is time to update them and plan for future generations. We will be purchasing different colors, White for the 40 days after Pascha and Christmas through the leave-taking of Theophany, Purple for the 50 days of Great Lent, and Gold for every other day of the year. The purchase of altar server vestments will include the purchasing of priest and deacon vestments. While some church organizations have come forward to help cover the cost of the vestments there is still an opportunity to donate to the purchasing of vestments. In each color we will be purchasing four adult size vestments at \$105 per vestment, six child size vestments (that we will order longer than we need, hem, and let out the hem as the boys grow) at \$85 per vestment, Deacon vestments at \$218 per set, Priest vestments at \$273 per set, and matching chalice covers at \$63 per set. If you're interested in contributing to the general purchase or would like to make a specific donation to cover certain vestments please contact John Stasko 412-304-1841 or jmstasko@gmail.com. If you're curious about the project, (why we chose these colors, where the vestments are being made, etc.) please reach out to Fr. John



Weekly Envelopes and Donations

Dear Parishioners,
Glory to Jesus Christ!

SS Peter and Paul Parish Council would like to thank you for your support over the last couple of weeks by sending in your envelopes and donations through the mail and the online Thith.ly donation program. This will help to pay salaries, utility bills and other necessary bills that continue to arrive while we are not in church together. We have taken measures to reduce our utility usage in our buildings and have agreed to postpone some of our projects until we understand when we can again resume our normal services. We look forward to seeing you all soon and worshipping together again.

With the recent postponement of our Divine Liturgies on Sundays please send your weekly envelopes and any donations directly to:

John Stasko
202 Midfield Circle Drive
McDonald, PA 15057

Continue to make the checks out to the church. I will gather all donations and make a deposit. This will save trips to Carnegie and the post office. I can make one trip to the bank once a week. Your mailed donations will help assist in paying the normal bills that will continue to come through during this difficult time. Many thanks to you for your help in this matter. Reminder - please do not send cash.

Another way to donate is to use the donate button on the website (www.orthodoxcarnegie.com) under the Support section. Make an online donation with your credit or debit card via our Tithely "DONATE" button link. You can select the ministry area to donate to from the drop down option menu.

- o General Fund [Supports general expenses and necessities of the parish for example]
- o Parishioner Commitments [Supports the "*Parishioner donation*" promise]
- o Cemetery Fund [Supports the upkeep and maintenance of our Parish Cemetery]
- o Restoration Fund [Supports the upkeep and maintenance of the Parish Buildings and Grounds]
- o Stewardship Fund [Supports charities that are supported by the Parish]
- o General Ministries of the Parish [Supports various ministries of the Parish]
- o Charest Adoption Fundraising [Supports the fundraising efforts for their adoption efforts]

PLEASE NOTE:

- >You may place a short comment about your donation in the "Note/Memo" section on the donation page.
 - >If you would like your donation to be a "*Re-curring Donation*", please check the "recurring giving" box.
 - >If you would like to help cover the cost of the processing fee of the online donation, please check the "cover cost" box.
- Parishioners, please use your "*Envelope Number*" for the "Member ID#" on the donation page.

Thank you and God Bless, John M. Stasko , 412-304-1841

Pascha and Doubt

Holy Week and Pascha present a real temptation to live one's faith in a way that seeks to be externally perfect rather than beautiful for Christ. Orthodox Christians see this when we boast about the length of our services and the strictness of our fasting. How much pressure do we feel to have the perfect Pascha experience that includes an overflowing basket along alongside well-dressed children? Move over to social media, and a quick look shows that there are no shortages of memes on this topic. Orthodox Christians have become experts at arguing over the most trivial detail. Do we really have to debate whether "Christ is Risen!" should be greeted with "Indeed He is Risen!" or "Truly He Is Risen!"?

It would appear that polite conformity has won the day.

What is polite conformity? It is a term coined by theologian Luigi Giussani. Polite conformity is the shallow water of our lives that Christ commands us to leave behind. It is adhering to all of the external rituals of Orthodox Christianity without taking the time to verify the Tradition on our own. It is a counterfeit form of witness that is all too familiar in today's parishes. Polite conformity means accepting Orthodox Christianity without criticism or questions. It gives lip service to the faith to please authority figures, family members, or a peer group. Polite conformity means nodding yes in Church while believing and behaving in a way that is contrary to the Orthodox Faith.

The truth of Pascha shatters the world of polite conformity, because one of the first lessons of the Risen Christ is that doubt is healthy.

Doubt is everywhere, from Holy Saturday to the Sunday of St. Thomas.

An Apostolic Question of Faith

On Holy Saturday the Gospel of Matthew tell us that “the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted.” (Matthew 28:16-20) The Gospel read at Agape Vespers tell us of the doubting Apostle Thomas who proclaims “Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe.” (John 20:25) And The Orthodox Church even devotes an entire Sunday to honoring the doubt that filled Thomas on the very first Sunday after Pascha.

Doubt has a special place in the Paschal season.

These scripture readings are not a coincidence but an example of how the Orthodox Faith challenges us to bring our doubts to Christ and transform them. “Doubt is but another element of faith” writes St. Augustine of Hippo, while St. Gregory the Great reminds us that, “The disbelief of Thomas has done more for our faith than the faith of the other disciples. As he touches Christ and is won over to belief, every doubt is cast aside, and our faith is strengthened. So the disciple who doubted and then felt Christ's wounds, becomes a witness to the reality of the resurrection.”

The most beautiful part of Christ dealing with doubt in the scriptures above is the fact that the Son of God does not force us to believe. He invites one to begin a journey of real love. He shows us through His example that every person is called to carry his or her cross and die to those things that do not bring us closer to Him. Doubt is a part of this process that brings new and everlasting life. The Apostle Thomas doubted and yet was invited into an ever-deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. He carried his cross of doubt. Today, there are many Orthodox Christians who have doubts and are in need of a Church that welcomes doubt as a healthy part of what it means to live the Orthodox Christian Faith.

Finding Balance

Holy Week and Pascha always see the Church welcoming new members into the Body of Christ. Make no mistake, these baptisms and chrismations should be celebrated. However, the Sunday of St. Thomas is a special time to remember that doubt is a healthy part of being made in the image and likeness of God. It is also time for the Church to place a particular emphasis on those who doubt and the needs they have. Far too many Orthodox Christians find themselves wandering away from the Church because their questions and doubts went unanswered and were even ridiculed.

However, “Not all who wander are lost.” writes J.R.R. Tolkien. St. Thomas Sunday is an excellent time to invite our wandering brothers and sisters to bring the doubts they have and the crosses they carry home to Christ. If the Tradition of the Church teaches us anything, it is that our faith may be the most healthy when it is full of doubt, and the Risen Christ may be closest when he appears the most distant in our lives.

<https://myocn.net/pascha-and-doubt/>



In the great Paschal Homily of St. John Chrysostom, we hear the golden-mouthed preacher say this about the encounter of Christ with Hades (or Hell):

He embittered it when it tasted of His flesh. And Isaiah, foretelling this, did cry:
Hell, said he, was embittered, when it encountered Thee in the lower regions.
It was embittered, for it was abolished.
It was embittered, for it was mocked.
It was embittered, for it was slain.
It was embittered, for it was overthrown.
It was embittered, for it was fettered in chains.
It took a body, and met God face to face.
It took earth, and encountered Heaven.
It took that which was seen, and fell upon the unseen.

Hades or Hell?

Some chafe at the use of the translation *Hell* and prefer *Hades* instead, saying that people have an idea of Hell as this fiery place of torment where demons stick the damned with pitchforks, while they don't have as defined of an idea of Hades, so it's better for us to use the latter term. But the problem with that analysis is that it fails to see that Hell and Hades are really the same thing but from two different mythological viewpoints.

In Greek myth, *Hades* is the name of the underworld, the place of death. But it is also the name of the god who rules over death and has death as his power over mankind. He rules there because he was flung there by some power greater than his own. He is able to swallow up the living and keep them in bondage.

In Germanic myth, *Hell* (or *Hel*) is also the name of the underworld, the place of death. And it is also the name of the god (or, in the Norse version, the goddess) who rules the underworld.

In short, these are two names from two different ancient cultures for both a place and the god who rules that place. And if you start looking into the names and general character for the underworld in numerous ancient cultures — all over the world, not just the Indo-European cultures that include Germanic and Greek mythology — you will discover that the name of the underworld and the name of the god who controls it are usually either the same name or closely related. The Aztec Mictlān is ruled by Mictlāntēcutli, for instance. The details are not identical across cultures, of course, but the general concept of a god who rules the underworld and has death in his control is almost universal, and in many cases, they do have the same or similar names.

The problem with the “*Hades* not *Hell*” crowd is that they’re ignoring the god and thinking only of the place.

You can find some scholarly analyses of mythology that say that the divine beings who rule the underworld are later “personifications” of the location concept, but this viewpoint assumes that mythologies are the product of human imagination and not of encounter with actual divine beings. In other words, they presume materialism and therefore treat narratives about gods as being useful fiction, invented by people who never actually saw a god but came up with the idea to “explain” things.

But even though we do not think and see the world as ancient people did, it is hard to imagine that any human being would start constructing claims about encountering divine beings without any prior experience of something divine. We tend to treat ancient people as though they were just gullible and saw gods in everything, yet somehow they also came up with the concept of gods on their own without having encounters with such beings.

God Meets the Gods

In any event, when Chrysostom says that Hades/Hell was “embittered,” he is referencing this passage from the Prophet Isaiah:

Hades from below was embittered meeting you; all the giants ruling the earth were risen up together against you, the ones rising from their thrones, all the kings of the nations. All shall answer and shall say to you, “You also are captured as even we; and are you reckoned among us? Your glory went down into Hades, your great gladness; underneath you they shall make a bed of putrefaction, and the work shall be your covering. O how fell from out of the heaven the morning star — the one by morning rising — was broken unto the earth, the one sending to all the nations.” (Isaiah 14:9-12, LXX)

So we see here a whole cast of spiritual beings being embittered and surprised at meeting God in the underworld — Hades himself, the giants ruling the earth, the rulers over the nations. These are not politicians and kings and so on, but rather spiritual beings who control the earth and are thrown into an uproar at meeting God there. Why? It is because the realm of death was the last place where they truly had control. And that “morning star” who fell down into the earth was the evil one, who was sent to the underworld and stripped of every power except death after he tempted mankind into joining his rebellion in Eden.

But then God enters into death itself, that last power and last realm left to the evil one, and defeats it. And if we understand death and Hades as fundamentally being about not just a “personified” location or even a state of being medically brain-dead, etc., but rather about being under the power of malevolent spiritual beings, then we can begin to understand what it means that Hades could be embittered (or, in my favorite translation, *vexed*) at being dethroned and rendered impotent.

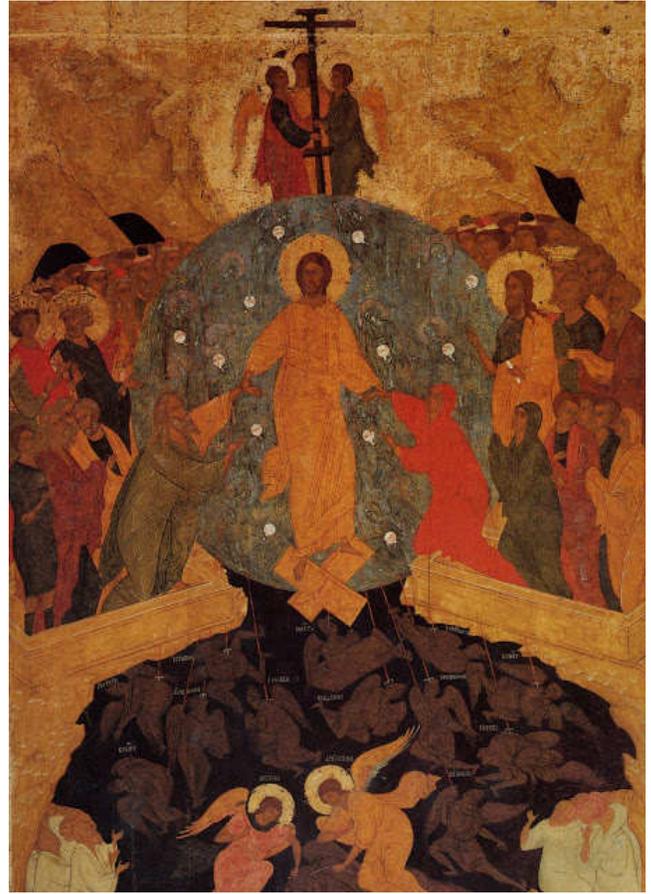
God Without the Gods

Because of the worldwide pandemic, our Great Lent, Holy Week and Pascha here in 2020 have been really difficult to endure, so difficult that many simply refuse to accept that we must endure it, demanding that we find some way to distribute holy communion as a kind of drive-up commodity — grocery stores and Starbucks are open, right? — or that we simply open the doors to the churches and just accept that many of us might die as a result of being infected — after all, is not life and death in the hands of God? Why shouldn’t we engage in behaviors that might kill us or others, if we truly believe that we belong to God? Or some just refuse to believe that a virus could get transmitted during a church service (despite mounting evidence to the contrary) or that churches have ever closed in response to pestilence (despite numerous historical examples).

Setting aside for the moment the many other problems with such an attitude, much of this makes the same mistake as the “*Hades* not *Hell*” argument. It treats the problem of death as being a matter simply of a physical state that of course God has control over.

But we might forget that death and Hades can be embittered because, not just according to the Bible but even according to nearly every ancient culture, the realm of death is bound up with spiritual beings — gods — who are the enemies of God. These spiritual powers rose up against Him and are now being judged by Him. Their realm is being justified, that is, being set in order. And that means that these demons are getting what comes to them and being driven out.

I believe that our task in this moment — as witnessed to by the nearly universal consensus not just of governments and medical authorities, but nearly all Orthodox bishops and pastors and even some holy elders who have spoken out — is to experience the embittering of death for ourselves, including even the death of what we expect our spiritual lives to look like. But if we are the Lord’s then we have nothing to fear from this experience, because the judgment of God is wrath to the wicked but refinement to the righteous. Refinement is not an easy or comfortable process, but it is necessary if we are to become purified.



We have been thrown into an embittering exile not because of some vast, worldwide conspiracy that has led to massive apostasy of even holy elders and monastics and the good-hearted pastors of the Church, but because in this age in which Christ rules in the midst of His enemies, even though Hades *has been* (past tense) embittered, he is still *being* (present tense) embittered. And inasmuch as we are still loyal in any way to death by means of our sins, then we also are being embittered.

It is not easy to accept this exile and embitterment. But I think our task is clearer if we understand that we are being wrested by God from the hand of His adversary the evil one, who had the power of death. Are we really willing to say that we will not do — for a little while — what is needed to preserve life? The life we have in this world is not nothing. It is the opportunity for each of us to repent, to renounce our alignment with the lord of death and to pledge allegiance to the Lord of Life.

It is true that God *can* control everything, but He does not actually exercise that level of control. We have free will. And the evil one and the demons have free will. We don’t have full freedom of action because we are not omnipotent. But there are at least three “factions,” as it were, in play in the balance of mankind between life and death. On the side of life is God and the heavenly hosts, and on the side of death is the evil one and the other demons. And then mankind may align himself with either.

The Refinement of Embitterment

Inasmuch as we are aligned with death, we need to repent, and that repentance will include being embittered, because when sin is burned away by God’s presence and action, it is not comfortable. But if we will accept this embittering with grace and patience, then we will find in our rising with Christ that the victory of the arising of God is in us, as well. We will find that the demons tremble and flee at our coming, as well.

Let us think beyond our momentary difficulties and ask how this present bitterness is for our purification and salvation. This means that we have to accept this as from the Lord, including the decisions of people we do not agree with.

I have been criticized a number of times recently because my approach to this pandemic has not been “How do we keep doing business as usual in face of all these obstacles?” but rather “Given that we have this problem, what do we do in the midst of it?” To me, though, the question is whether I believe this present state of things is given to me for my salvation.

After all, it is not as though I can single-handedly alter the near unanimity of leaders both civil and ecclesiastical on our response to COVID-19. So even if I disagree with them, what do I do?

I can rage against them or I can accept that even this is from the Lord, even decisions I may disagree with, even decisions that mean agony for me, like telling my parishioners to stay home, like telling a fellow priest that I cannot let him come and serve with me, like telling my own wife and children to stay home.

One of the most profound things that my spiritual father ever told me and that I keep coming back to is this (and I am paraphrasing a little here): This life that you now have, with all of its difficulties, all of its pain, all of its inconveniences and obstacles, that you see as being so often in the way of the holy life that you want to live — this is God’s answer to all your prayers. He knows what you need for your salvation, and He gave you this. It is not in the way — it is the way.

We will not experience the benefits of refinement if we do not accept what God weaves into the tapestry of our lives — even as it looks like the threads of life and death sometimes are in diabolical hands — if we do not accept them as from the Lord. And I believe that we can accept even this present embitterment if we will remember that this is part of a rebellion being put down by God.

Trampling Down Death by Death

In this rebellion, the evil one seeks to hold on to his last power, which is death. And he seeks to ensnare us in it, to become deathly like him and remain so for eternity.

But how did Christ undo his power? How did Christ embitter Hades and overthrow him? He did it by accepting even the embitterment of death for Himself. It was the most wrong and unjust thing ever to happen, that the Lord of Life should be taken even for a moment by the lord of death. But in the end, it was Hades who was fooled and undone. It was Hades who lost his kingdom. It was Hades who took a body and met God.

Sometimes, I think we want Christ to trample down death by His death but not with our death. It is as though we somehow expect to have resurrection for ourselves without death for ourselves. So we do not accept to die in this present life by accepting impingement upon ourselves. And so when we die (physically), we may end up dying (spiritually).

But if we will accept death with Him even now by accepting to be embittered even now, then we will emerge with Him in life, trampling down death with Him *by death*. We can’t escape that death has to be trampled by death. Death will not be escaped, but it can be transformed into life, destroyed completely.

The only way to accept this present embittering death so that we are refined for life is through patience and humility, through repentance. There is no other way.

For in the end, even this present Pascha is revealed to be the Pascha of the Lord, the Pascha on which we celebrate the death of Death, the Pascha which crashes into the gates of the underworld, wrests the dead away from Death, and gives them life forevermore.

<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/asd/2020/04/18/hades-is-embittered/>



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Відділів Служіння Церкви

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ:

Although we are not able to be physically together during these Holy Days because of the importance of social distancing, I want to assure you that we are all united spiritually as a Church. Our dedicated priests shall continue to serve the spiritual needs of our faithful in every location where Ukrainian Orthodox parishes are located in our great country – the United States of America. Our liturgical services will be served on ‘behalf of all and for all.’ We the faithful here on earth and the saints in heaven are in communion, offering our prayerful worship to God and receiving His graces as we need them.

Complying with efforts to mitigate the pandemic has meant great inconvenience, economic hardship and even loss of employment for many. I urge you not to give in to discouragement and despair. God will see us through this difficult time. I humbly ask you that you continue to Carry the Light of Faith in the life of our Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA. The Offices of Ministry of the Church are stepping forward in faith as they continue their good work with the youth, elderly and those that are most vulnerable of us, trusting that you will support our efforts.

Many of you have asked how you can continue to help and support our Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA during this time when church buildings are closed and we are isolated from our family, friends and community. One of the most practical ways to help your Church is to continue to do what you have always done: support our Metropolia Center with your financial resources.

Please continue to contribute, even during the period you are unable to physically participate in all activities of the Church. But your contributions are the main source of financial support for our Metropolia and parishes, and while some expenses may be a little lower during this time, we still have many fixed costs that need to be attended to.

Please, consider making a donation to the ministry of the UOC of the USA:

1. Online via PayPal using the DONATE button on our website: uocofusa.org
2. Bank Transfer - please contact treasurer@uocofusa.org for details
3. Checks - made payable to UOC of the USA - and mailed to the Consistory Offices:

Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA

135 Davidson Ave.
Somerset, NJ 08873

All donations are greatly appreciated!

With prayers, wishing you most spiritually uplifting Feast of Resurrection of our Lord,

Archbishop Daniel

Calendar of Events

June 6

53rd Annual Pysanky Sale

Parish Weekly Schedule

Monday

Kyiv Ukrainian Dance Ensemble & School

Rehearsals begin every Monday at 6:00 pm. Classes for all ages.

For more info call Director Natalie Kapeluck or just stop down any Monday.

Thursday Morning

Senior Coffee Hour

You're invited to our FREE coffee and donuts, and sometime pancakes, French toast or waffles every Thursday from 10:00 AM to 11:30 . . .or whenever it's over. At the parish hall. YOU ARE NOT PERMITTED TO BRING ANYTHING!!! However, bring a Friend!!! Need A Ride, Call: Steve Sivulich, (Hall Phone: 412-276-9718) SPONSORED BY:

Sts. Peter & Paul Kitchen Workers

3rd Sunday of the Month

St John & Martin's Closet

Clothing for men, women and children. Bedding & towels

Trade something old for something new, leave a donation. or just take what you need.

Donations of clean, gently used or new clothing/bedding accepted when the closet door is open. all 276-9718 to schedule a donation.

Parish Website/Social Media

To Submit items for publication on website & social media:

>email information/items to orthodoxcarnegie@gmail.com

>if you have a flyer (not required) submit in picture format if possible

>allow 24 to 48 hours for request to be completed.

If needed sooner, please indicate and text Chris Mills at 412-716-0562.

>an email can be submitted from Parish Website | Contact Page ; using the technology email form

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April 12 _____
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April 26 _____

May 3 _____
May 10 _____
May 17 _____
May 24 _____
May 31 _____

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