

SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church

Volume 16, Issue 8

August 2016

July Council Highlights

- ✘ June's Operating Income was \$12,711.81 and Operating Expenses were \$11,136.15, resulting in a positive balance of 1,575.66 for the month, and a year-to-date positive balance of \$16,646.36.
- ✘ There remains a net balance of \$1,361 from the Marine Care Packages. That sum will be used for future outreach in Valdyka's ministry fund.



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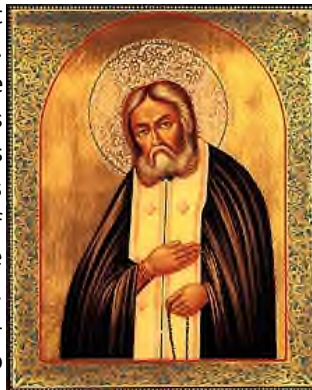
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Christlike Love

During the week of July 19, the Church remembers two saints who showed deep love for Christ by doing things that go far beyond what most people would be willing to do.

The first is Saint Seraphim of Sarov. On July 19 the Church celebrates the transfer of his relics from his original place of burial to the Church of Sts. Zosimus and Sabbatius, and then to the Dormition



Cathedral in Sarov. Over 200,000 people paid their respects to the beloved saint, and many healings took place during the procession with his relics.

We know many things about Saint Seraphim, including his wonder-working and his gentle companionship with wild animals. But one of the most unusual things we know is the story of what caused him to walk hunched over during the later years of his life.

Saint Seraphim was working in his garden when he was attacked by robbers. Rather than defend himself or use his heavy garden tools to fight them off, he allowed them to

beat him badly. It was after that incident that his injured back was permanently bent and affected his walk.

For most people, the idea of not even trying to defend our-

selves from an unjust attack is unthinkable. But Saint Seraphim's Christlike love for God's creatures made him unwilling to harm any of them, no matter what the circumstances.

Saint John Chrysostom comments on a similar episode, when companions of Saint Paul didn't fight back against attackers: "For to endure when insulted is God's part: to be merely abusive, is the part of the devil...to them that beat us, let us return blow for blow, by meekness, by silence, by long-suffering..."

The second saint, commemorated on July 21, is the Venerable Simeon of Edessa, Fool-for-Christ. Like Saint Seraphim, though in a different way, he showed Christlike love that would be difficult for most people to manage. He called people to repentance by feign-

ing madness. He would bound around crazily in the streets and approach people, whispering their sins in their ears and urging them to repent. Sometimes he appeared in dreams and reminded the dreamers to repent. To do this, of course, he had to have insight into people's deepest secrets, which he did.

Commenting on Saint Simeon in "The Prologue from Ochrid," Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich writes about Lycerges, the king of Sparta, who set down strict laws and got his citizens to promise to obey them while he was away for a protracted period of time. Having secured their agreement he left, and never returned, thus "binding them to their oath forever."

Lycerges' willingness to leave his country forever was a sacrifice for the good of the Spartan people, Bishop Nikolai writes: "But how much greater a sacrifice it is voluntarily to leave one's mind and always to appear before men as mad! Is not madness the greatest banishment known to man? And to live year after year in that state, and all in order to be of help to one's neighbour!"

Message from Our Rector

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The month of August brings with it several beautiful feasts, among them the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord (August 6) and the Feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos (August 15). This month also heralds the time of transition from the days of vacations, catching up of overdue projects, and other summer activities to what we might refer to as the “regular” time of the year as students return to class and our focus returns to more commonplace and routine activities.

I think that this time of the year also provides us with a wonderful opportunity for reflection—it serves as a bridge to reflect upon how we spent the summer and how we plan to spend the school year ahead of us. And to reflect on bigger, possibly more profound aspects of our lives. As an example, I invite you to reflect upon how you view our parish community as well as your place within it. We are grateful for and understand the responsibilities and blessings that are ours in the life we strive to live as Orthodox Christians. But I wonder how often we reflect upon the fact that our Orthodox Christian life is lived not only as members of the Orthodox Church but even more specifically as members of the Eucharistic community that gathers in prayer, worship, fellowship, and service at Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church.

When I think of our parish community, these are a few of the thoughts that come to mind: we are prayerful, dedicated to

worship, always seeking to be hospitable, desiring to serve, always growing, changing and remaining the same, looking to the future and grateful for the past, celebrating what we have received, building upon the strong foundation that has been given us, seeking new avenues of service, reaching out to the community around us, supportive of all aspects of our life together, creating an oasis of faith in the midst of the city, enjoying old friendships and establishing new ones, wanting to share with others the beauty and boldness of our faith, dedicated to our social life and fellowship, always willing to open our doors to our neighbors.... And the list continues on and on.

I’m sure that you can arrive at many more thoughts—and many more original thoughts—about our parish community and your place within it. Everyone is unique and everyone has his or her unique place in our parish. However one understands this, and as different as each person’s thoughts, reflections, and understandings might be, I am confident that there is one common element, one common theme: we are all grateful that the Lord has brought us together in this family of faith.

As we soon turn the corner and enter back into our more “regular” schedule, I look forward to continuing our life together in this blessed parish. And I am grateful for the part that each one of you plays in it.

With love in Christ,

+Bishop Daniel

TRANSFIGURATION

There is little doubt that the feast of the Transfiguration of Christ belonged first to the pre-Easter season of the Church. It was perhaps celebrated on one of the Sundays of Lent, for besides certain historical evidence and the fact that today St Gregory Palamas, the great teacher of the Transfiguration of Christ, is commemorated during Lent, the event itself is one which is definitely connected with the approaching death and resurrection of the Saviour.

... for when they would behold Thee crucified, they would understand that Thy suffering was voluntary (Kontakion).

The feast of the Transfiguration is presently celebrated on the sixth of August, probably for some historical reason. The summer celebration of the feast, however, has lent itself very well to the theme of transfiguration. The blessing of grapes, as well as other fruits and vegetables on this



day is the most beautiful and adequate sign of the final transfiguration of all things in Christ. It signifies the ultimate flowering and fruitfulness of all creation in the paradise of God’s unending Kingdom of Life where all will be transformed by the glory of the Lord.

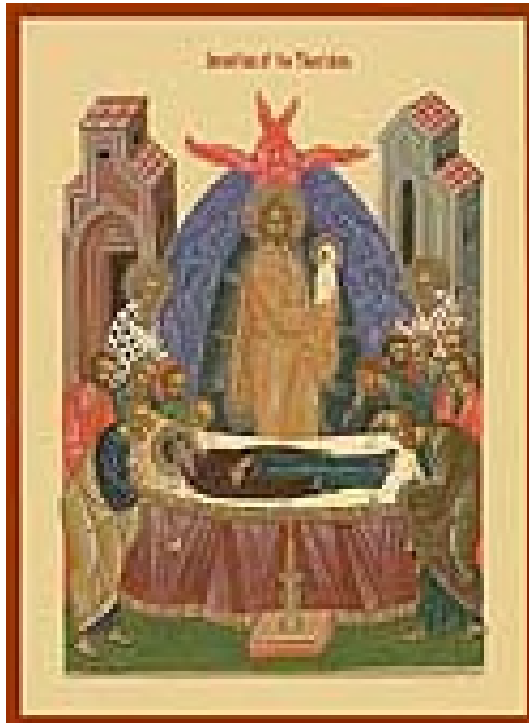
Dying Like a Disciple

Fr. Steven Kostoff

Every year on August 15, the Church bids us come to the final bedside of the Theotokos and learn how to die. It is an important lesson, and all the more important because the secular world offers us no clue. Indeed, the world seems intent on denying the reality of death. In earlier and saner ages, everyone mostly died at home, surrounded by loved ones who would pray with them in their final hours and wash and attend to the body after death had occurred. Even young children knew what corpses looked like and had contact with them. The phrase from the old Latin hymn *Media vita in morte sumus*—"in the midst of life we are in death"—resonated for everyone, whether they had heard the old hymn sung or not.

Now all has changed. Most people do not die at home but in the hospital, surrounded by professionals and strangers. After death they are whisked from the hospital room to the hospital morgue and from there, all too often, to the funeral home. At many funerals the corpse is not present, only a photo of the deceased taken while they were alive. And the final rites are not even necessarily called "funerals," for the word is thought to savor too much of death. The rite is now called "a celebration of life"—one might imagine that the title indicated not the rites of death, but a birthday party. In short, today's funeral industry, whose main function seemingly is to sanitize death and save the survivors from its horror and trauma, dominates today. The room where

the casket may be found (if there is a casket) is called "the slumber room," though no one ever sleeps there. And no one ever uses the verb "die." No one now ever dies. They pass on. In every funeral chapel I have entered, soothing music is played in the background, often sentimental renditions of Protestant hymns that no one has sung in most Protestant churches for at least a generation. The function of the music is not liturgical, but anaesthetic. Not surprisingly in such a



death-denying culture, no one knows how to die. That is perhaps why most people don't want to talk about death, though the certainty of death hangs over them all. They have no clue.

But the Mother of God has a clue, and she knew exactly how to die: surrendering up her soul to her Son, surrounded by His Church. In

this—her final act on earth—she gives us a lesson for eternity. This lesson consists of four parts.

First of all, dying for the disciple of Jesus consists of turning from this world with all its glory and heart-break, with all its beauty and betrayal, to face the Lord. Of course we rejoice and find comfort in the love of friends and family that surround us in our final hours. But dying means that at the end we say goodbye to them all, and turn from them to face the Saviour, the eternal Fountain. Every day we have followed in the footsteps of the Theotokos and have said, "Behold, I am the handmaid (or servant) of the Lord." On our final day we remain His servant, and we commit our soul to His hands one last time. We die as we have lived, looking to Jesus.

Secondly, for the disciple of Christ dying means dying in love and charity with all men. Saint Paul tells us of the folly of letting the sun go down on our anger (Ephesians 4:26); how much more foolish is it to end our whole life in anger? The Lord is crystal clear: if we do not forgive men their trespasses, God will not forgive ours. We say this each time we pray the Lord's Prayer, and this truth must guide us at the end. Before death silences our voice and stops our heart, we must freely and fully forgive anyone who has ever hurt us or sinned against us.

Thirdly, dying as a disciple of Christ means that we receive the Eucharistic Gifts one last time before embarking on our journey to eternal life. A wise person will not wait until after

(Continued on page 4)

Dying Like a Disciple (Cont'd)

(Continued from page 3)

their Christian friend has died to call the priest, but will call for the priest while there is still time for their friend to receive Holy Communion one last time. That is the point of the petition asking God for “a good defense before the dread judgment seat of Christ,” for our good defense comes from this final sacramental bestowal of forgiveness. We step through the dark door of death as those freshly pardoned and at peace.

Finally, the death of the Theotokos teaches us that Christian death should come as the culmination of a Christian life. There is no sense living like a worldling, intending to beg forgiveness before the end comes in what

some have called “an eleventh hour repentance.” For one thing, we have no guarantee that we will not die at 10:30. But more than that, the decision to delay repentance and faith brings its own dangers to the human heart. If we spend year after year saying no to Christ and pushing away His daily offer of grace, our heart does not remain unchanged by such denials and apostasies. Denying Christ makes the heart colder and harder, and at the end we may find ourselves incapable of turning to Him — which is the ultimate and eternal catastrophe. There was never a moment when the humble maiden of Nazareth turned from

“But the Mother of God has a clue, and she knew exactly how to die: surrendering up her soul to her Son, surrounded by His Church. In this—her final act on earth—she gives us a lesson for eternity.”

God and rejected Him. With each breath she said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord,” and that was why she was able to die in peace and triumph. Taught by her death, we can one day die in peace and triumph too.

Reprinted from the website of the Orthodox Church in America, Reflections in Christ, August 15, 2015, <https://oca.org/reflections/fr.-lawrence-farley/dying-like-a-disciple>*

“Even if we have thousands of acts of great virtue to our credit, our confidence in being heard must be based on God’s mercy and His love for men. Even if we stand at the very summit of virtue, it is by mercy that we shall be saved.”

—St. John Chrysostom

Around SS Peter & Paul

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

August 1 Peter Radjenovich
Barbara Peterson
Joe & Jane Matthews
6 Elona Stark
8 Yana Molodova
9 Dan Perrotto
13 Boris & Carrie Niegoda
15 William Osolinsky
19 William Weiss
25 Juliana Delsante
26 Jim Hanemaayer
27 Dennis Tarasevich

PRAYER LIST

“I was sick and you visited me.”

Matt 25:36

We offer prayers to all of our parishioners who are ill or unable to attend services:

Protodeacon Alexis	Ted Demos
Larry Gardner	Ann Carroll
Ann Garza	Rose Kurowski
Alan Burns	Tillie (Tatiana) Kulek
Anna Michkofsky	

If you know of anyone else in need of our prayers, please contact Bishop Daniel.

Bits and Pieces

PARISH COUNCIL

There will be no parish council meeting this month.

TEEN/YOUNG ADULT LEAGUE

The teen and young adult league will be meeting in early September to begin discussing the details of Project Mexico summer 2017. This mission project will require fundraising and a dedicated effort from all those participating.

Please begin to think if you would like to be a part of this amazing mission project; everyone in the parish is welcome. However, the number of slots are limited.

All those I have talked to about Project Mexico have related that it is a truly a life changing week of service.

Thanks!

Mara Hecht

GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

You are always encouraged to bring guests to our services, whether Orthodox, Christians of the various denominations, non-Christians, as well as those who hold no particular belief. Indeed, bringing guests, especially those who are not part of any other Christian community, is a part of our ongoing outreach and evangelization. However, it is also encouraged to prepare them for their visit by letting them know what to expect. You can help them feel comfortable by explaining to them the Orthodox practice concerning the reception of Holy Communion. It's very simple: The reception of Holy Communion is reserved to those who are baptized and chrismated members of the Orthodox Church who have prepared themselves by fasting, prayer, participation in the divine services, and a timely Confession.

BOOKSTORE

As the fall approaches and our snowbirds return, the bookstore will be restocking its shelves with new titles. If you have a book that has been spiritually helpful and you believe others in our parish would also benefit from it, please drop Katrina a note

and she'll try to get it in the inventory.



SUMMER STEWARDSHIP

The life and work of your parish community continues even when you are traveling and away and enjoying your vacation. You are asked to kindly remember this and to maintain—and even increase—your stewardship during the summer months. May the Lord bless your travels and bring you safely home.



WELCOME

We welcome all visitors to SS Peter & Paul. We hope your visit was enriching and enlightening. Please join us in the Cultural Center, behind the church, for our Fellowship Hour. It's a chance to meet some of our members, other visitors, and enjoy some coffee and fellowship.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations and best wishes to John Hecht and Lauren Behren on their recent engagement! May God grant them many years of joy and happiness together.



BIBLE TRIVIA

1. In what city was Jesus born?
2. How many books are in the New Testament?
3. What type of insect did John the Baptist eat in the desert?
4. Who were the first apostles called to follow Jesus?
5. How many people did Jesus feed with five loaves of bread and two fish?
6. After Jesus was arrested, which apostle disowned him three times?
7. Who recognized Jesus as the Messiah when he was presented at the Temple as a baby?
8. Who asked Pilate for Jesus' body after the crucifixion?
9. Paul was shipwrecked on what island?
10. What is the shortest book in the New Testament?
11. Matthew was a _____?
12. To what city was Saul traveling when he encountered a great and blinding light?
13. Who is the author of the Book of Revelation?
14. Who was the first person to come upon the injured man in the parable of the Good Samaritan?
15. Finish this verse. "In every battle you will need faith as your _____ to stop the fiery arrows aimed at you by Satan."

Answers below.

ANSWERS: 1. Bethlehem; 2. 27; 3. Loaves and Fishes; 4. Peter and Andrew; 5. 5,000; 6. Peter; 7. Simeon; 8. Joseph of Arimathea; 9. Malta; and 10. 2 John; 11. Tax collector; 12. Damascus; 13. John; 14. Priest; and 15. Shield.

BIBLE TRIVIA

August 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Procession of the Lifegiving Cross Beginning of Dormition Fast	2	3	4	5 Forefeast Transfiguration 6:00pm Vespers	6 Transfiguration of Our Lord 9:00am Divine Liturgy <i>Blessing of Fruit</i> 5:00pm Vespers
7 Valaam Icon 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy	8 Tolga Icon	9 Ven. Herman of Alaska, Wonder-worker of All America NO COUNCIL MEETING	10	11	12	13 St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, Wonder-worker of All Russia 5:00pm Vespers
14 Forefeast Dormition 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy	15 Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos 9:00am Divine Liturgy <i>Blessing of Flowers</i>	16 Feodorovskaya Icon	17	18	19	20 5:00pm Vespers
21 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy	22 Georgian Icon	23 Leavetaking Dormition	24 Petrovskaya Icon	25	26 Vladimir Icon	27 5:00pm Vespers
<p>We welcome all of our guests and visitors. Please join us in the Cultural Center for Fellowship Hour following Divine Liturgy each Sunday.</p>						
28 Ven. Job of Pochaev 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy	29 Beheading of St. John the Baptist	30	31	1 Church New Year Chernigov-Gethsemane Icon	2 Kaluga Icon	3 5:00pm Vespers
4 Icon "The Unburnt Bush" 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy	5 LABOR DAY	6	7 Forefeast Nativity of the Theotokos 6:00pm Vespers	8 Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos 9:00am Divine Liturgy	9 Righteous Parents Joachim & Anna	10 5:00pm Vespers