

SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church

Volume 19, Issue 6

June 2019

May Council Highlights

- ✘ April's Operating Income was \$21,800.49 and Operating Expenses were \$20,051.99 resulting in a positive balance of \$1,748.50.
- ✘ His Eminence, Archbishop BENJAMIN will visit June 8-9. Luncheon to follow Divine Liturgy on June 9th.
- ✘ MBAS coordinating SS Peter and Paul Luncheon to be held on June 30 following Divine Liturgy.
- ✘ Review of parish by-laws continues.



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The Trinity

Pentecost is also the Feast of the Holy Trinity. It's a good day to consider this question: How can God be One and Undivided, as Christians claim, and at the same time be three distinct Persons, as Christians also claim?

Part of the answer is that this is how God has shown Himself to be in Scripture, both the Old and New Testaments. The Book of Genesis is one example. The second verse of the book says that "the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters" at the time of creation.

Then, in 1:26, God says, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness." This verse with its plural "our" is what the Gospel writer John is referring to when he writes, "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (1:3). John is describing Jesus Christ, the Word of God, as co-creator with the Father.



So the Bible clearly establishes the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as the three Persons of the Trinity. Yet some Biblical commentators contend that when God speaks in Genesis about making man "in our image" He is addressing not Christ, but the beings who surround Him in heaven, the members of the heavenly court.

This contention doesn't really make sense. The angels and the beings around God are still created by Him. They can bear His image, but they cannot share it as His equals by nature any more than we can. They too are creatures, even though they are privileged to stand before their Maker in heaven.

Father Alexander Schmemmann, writing about the Creed in "Celebration of Faith" Volume I, gives the other part of the answer. He says that God MUST be a Trinity of Persons:

"We believe in one God, but not in a God who is alone, not in a God who is self-centered, not in a God who lives in and for Himself. God is love, Christianity says. But to love is to be turned towards the Other, and at its most exalted, to love is to surrender to Him. The Father, says the Gospel, loves the Son and gives everything to Him. The Son, says the Gospel, loves the Father and gives Himself totally to Him. Finally, the Holy Spirit is this gift of love itself, this love itself as gift, joy, fullness, existence, thirst and quenching of thirst, giving and receiving.

And through this love, through this giving, God creates the world, calls each of us into life, makes each of us beloved and bestows His love, His Spirit, so that each can partake of divine Life. Thus we pray to the Spirit: 'Come and abide in us'...And in answer He comes to abide in us, to lead us, as Christ promised, into all truth...to give us eternal life.

This then is the radiant mystery of Christian faith, the mystery of God who is Trinity, the God who is Love."

Message from Our Rector

Beloved in Christ,

Christ is risen!

We are drawing near to the end of the Great Forty Days of Holy Pascha. Having passed through the solemn and sobering days of Great Lent, having experienced the solemnity of Holy Week, and having joyously celebrated the Lord's Resurrection throughout these forty days of the Paschal Season, we will now prepare for the awesome day of Holy Pentecost and then enter into the weeks of the summer with its own cycle of feasts and fasts. Preparing for the days and weeks ahead, I have been reflecting upon the Lord as the Good Shepherd who leads His flock and guides and protects us throughout the ebb and flow of the year and the seasons of our lives.

In the Gospel of John (cf. John 10) Jesus is presented as *the true Shepherd* of God's chosen flock. "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep" (v. 11). He speaks about the relationship that binds him to the sheep of the flock, namely, to His disciples (that is, to us), and He emphasizes the fact that it is a relationship of mutual recognition. "My sheep"—He says—"hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish" (vv. 27-28). In carefully reading this phrase, we are able to observe that Jesus' work is explained in several actions: *Jesus speaks; Jesus knows; Jesus gives eternal life; Jesus safeguards.*

The Good Shepherd—Jesus—is attentive to each one of us. He seeks us and loves us, addresses His Word to us, knowing the depths of our heart, our desires and our hopes, as well as our failures and disappointments. He accepts us and loves us as we are, with our merits and our faults. He "gives eternal life" to each one of us: that is, He offers us the opportunity to live a full life, without end. Moreover, He keeps us safe and leads us lovingly, helping us to journey upon difficult paths and the

sometimes dangerous roads that appear in life.

The words and actions that describe the way in which Jesus, the Good Shepherd, interacts with us correspond to the verbs that relate to the sheep, namely to each one of us: "*hear my voice*", "*follow me*". They are actions that show how we must correspond to the tender and caring attitudes of the Lord. Indeed, hearing and recognizing His voice, implies a deep relationship with Him. This relationship with Christ is strengthened in prayer, in the heart-to-heart encounter with the divine Master and Shepherd of our souls. This relationship with Jesus, this openness, prayerfully speaking with Jesus and prayerfully listening to Him speak to us, strengthens within us the desire to follow Him, by emerging from the rocky path of errant ways and abandoning selfish behavior in order to set out on new paths of Christian fellowship and of self-sacrificial giving, following His example.

Let us not forget that Jesus is the only Shepherd who speaks to us, knows us, gives us eternal life and safeguards us. We are the only flock and we only have to strive to hear his voice, while he lovingly examines the sincerity of our hearts. And from this constant and ever-deepening relationship with our Shepherd, from speaking with Him and listening to Him, springs the joy of following Him, allowing ourselves to be led to the fullness of eternal life.

As we leave behind the season of Pascha, let us turn to the Ever-virgin Mary, Mother of Christ the Good Shepherd. May she, who readily responded to God's call, protect our families and our parish and help us to be faithful in proclaiming the Gospel in the service of the Kingdom of God.

With love in the Risen Lord, the Good Shepherd who leads and protects His Flock,

+Bishop Daniel

MOTHER'S DAY MOMENTS



SS. Peter and Paul: The Greatest and Most Righteous Pillars of the Church

Fr. Steven Kostoff

During their earthly lives, all the saints are an incentive to virtue for those who hear and see them with understanding, for they are human icons of excellence, animated pillars of goodness, and living books, which teach us the way to better things [Homily on Saints Peter and Paul by Saint Gregory Palamas].

On June 29, we celebrated and commemorated the two great Apostles Peter and Paul. Their martyrdom in Rome is a very well-attested historical event, happening probably between the years 64 and 68 A.D. under the Roman emperor Nero. This is considered within the Church to be such a great feast that it is preceded by a



prescribed time of fasting, a practice only reserved otherwise for the great feasts of the Lord (Nativity and Pascha) and the Mother of God (Dormition). This both stresses the historical greatness of these two apostles, the accomplishments of their respective ministries, their martyric ends, and the very ministry and role of an apostle in proclaiming the Gospel to the world in fulfillment of the Lord's command to preach the Good News to "all nations" [Matthew 28:16-20]. Indeed, Saint Clement of Rome in his First Epistle, referred to Saints Peter and Paul as "the greatest and most righteous pillars [of the Church]." On careful reflection, it is not simply pious rhetoric that informs some of the hymns chanted in their honor during this Feast:

What spiritual songs shall we sing for Peter and Paul? They have silenced the sharp tongues of the godless. They are awesome swords of the Spirit. They are the adornment of Rome; They have nourished the whole world with the Word of God. They are the living tablets of the New Testament written by the hand of God; Christ Who has great mercy, has exalted them in Zion [Great Vespers].

In the New Testament, fourteen of the Epistles are traditionally attributed to Saint Paul and two are attributed to Saint Peter. The entire Acts of the Apostles is basically devoted to recording some of the major events in the history of these two apostles "in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" [Acts 1:8]. It may not be wholly accurate to refer to Saints Peter and Paul as the apostles, respectively, "to the circumcised" (the Jews) and the "uncircumcised" (the Gentiles) – for Saint Peter preached to the Gentiles and Saint Paul to the Jews) – but this is a way of capturing the fullness of their combined ministries so that Jews and Gentiles alike would be united in the one Body of Christ in fulfillment of God's design.

At Great Vespers of this Feast, three New Testament readings are prescribed, all from Saint Peter's first Epistle. We hear from the magnificent opening of 1 Peter, and this passage profoundly presents the essence of the Gospel as proclaimed in the apostolic age of the Church's foundation, by the "prince of the apostles." For

those who have not heard or read this passage recently, a good portion of it deserves to be recorded here so as "to make your day:"

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though for a little while you may have to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold which though perishable is tested by fire, may redound to praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Without having seen Him you love Him; though you do not now see Him you believe in Him and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy. As the outcome of your faith you obtain the salvation of your souls [1 Peter 1:3-9].

In this passage, Saint Peter reminds us that from the beginning the Gospel bestowed upon on Christians a "living hope" that was based on the fact of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. All New Testament writers establish Christian hope on the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead. (In his first Epistle to the Thessalonians, the Apostle Paul did not want his early converts to be "without hope" like their pagan neighbors, thus attesting to how important hope is for the believing Christian). The Apostle Peter was not offering yet another philosophy, but proclaiming the activity of God – "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" – within the realm of human history; that is that God has acted decisively on our behalf by

(Continued on page 4)

SS. Peter and Paul: The Greatest and Most Righteous Pillars of the Church

(Continued from page 3)

overcoming death itself through the resurrection of Jesus. He then describes our “inheritance” in heaven in strikingly powerful images, emphasizing the eternal and unassailable reality of heaven—“imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.” This is in sharp contrast to life as we now know it in this world, for all created things are perishable, subject to defilement and destined to fade away. The Apostle Paul confirms this also by saying that “the form of this world is fading away” [1 Corinthians 7:31]. “Guarded by faith,” we await a salvation that will be “revealed in the last time,” meaning the Parousia and end of time.

Yet, the apostle knows that this gift cannot be lightly received and treated. It will only come after “various trials” that are inevitable in a fallen world. In this instance, Saint Peter was most likely referring to persecution, as this had already broken out against the earliest Christians. However, suffering comes in other forms. These trials will test the “genuineness” of our faith, purifying it if we emerge from these tribulations purged like gold “tested by fire.” All of this is true even though we have not seen nor “see” Jesus even now. This is true of all of Christ’s disciples through the ages, called by Jesus Himself “blessed” by believing though not actually having seen Him [John 20:29].

The strength of this experience is beautifully expressed by Saint Peter when he confidently states that we “rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy.” This is almost embarrassing when we admit dragging ourselves to church or praying as if constrained under a heavy obligation or a “religious duty” that takes us away from more “interesting” activities! A joyless

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Christianity is completely foreign to the New Testament, as is a “second place” (or “third” or fourth,” etc.) Christianity in the priorities of our lives. The intended “outcome” of all this is “the salvation of your souls.” Is this why every liturgical service that begins with the Great Litany has us praying to the Lord, in the first full petition, for the “peace from above

and for the salvation of our souls?” There is nothing “selfish” in seeking or accepting the “salvation of our souls.” This is the gift of God that is intended for all. In the assurance of this gift, we can work more steadfastly on behalf of others, and share what God has done on our behalf.

The Apostles Peter and Paul are truly “rivers of wisdom and upholders of the Cross!” They exemplified the later teaching of Saint Ignatius of Antioch of the mystery of Christ that conveys “life in death,” for they died as martyrs but are eternally alive in Christ. We can now read their epistles and their lives as “living books which

teach us the way to better things” as Saint Gregory Palamas said of them. We seek their prayers as we strive to be worthy of the title of “Christian.”

Reprinted from the Orthodox Church in America web site, <https://oca.org/reflections/fr.-steven-kostoff/ss.-peter-and-paul-the-greatest-and-most-righteous-pillars-of-the-church> ✕

MORE MOTHER'S DAY MOMENTS



Bits and Pieces

HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP BENJAMIN will be making an archpastoral visit to our parish the weekend of June 8-9. He will be present for Vespers on Saturday, June 8, and preside at the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy on Sunday, June 9. We look forward to welcoming His Eminence, our diocesan bishop and archpastor.

The Myrrhbearers Altar Society will be coordinating a luncheon following Divine Liturgy. For more information, or to volunteer to bring food or to help with set-up and clean-up, please call or text contact Heather Pfeiffer at 602-616-1340.

FEAST OF SAINTS PETER AND PAUL The celebration of our patronal feast will take place on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, June 28, 29, and 30. Vespers will be served on Friday, June 28, at 6:00 p.m. The Divine Liturgy will be celebrated on Saturday, June 29, at 9:00 a.m. Finally, we will have pot luck luncheon in celebration of our patronal feast following Divine Liturgy on Sunday.

THE MYRRHBEARERS ALTAR SOCIETY will have their next meeting on June 23rd.

The MBAS is coordinating a potluck to celebrate Sts. Peter and Paul day on Sunday, June 30. Please see Heather Pfeiffer to sign up to bring an item.

SUMMER IS HERE! Despite what the calendar says, summer temperatures are here. As in your own homes, *please do not prop open doors to the outside* as this practice just vents the cool air out and the hot air in. Also, be sure to keep the doors to each room closed.

SAINTS PETER AND PAUL FAST, the Church's annual Fast in preparation for the Feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, begins each year on the Monday following the Sunday after Pentecost. This year it begins on Monday, June 24 and concludes after the

Divine Liturgy on Saturday, June 29th.

FOCA is taking orders for personalized coasters. They are \$12 for a set of 4 and make great shower, wedding and housewarming gifts. A set will be on display in social hall. This is an ongoing fundraiser so remember us for the holidays.



CHURCH SCHOOL students were busy crafting floral magnets to present as gifts



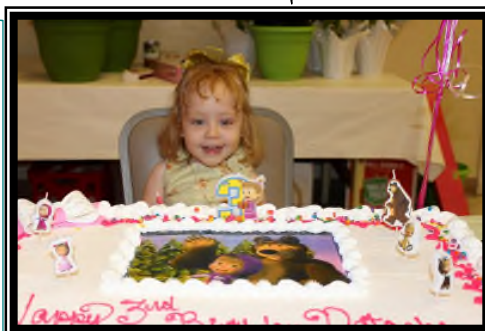
Around SS Peter & Paul

JUNE BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

- June 1 Elena Kerr
- Irina O'Brien
- 3 Anne Elise Ferbrache
- Michael Shubin
- 8 Marilyn Bezkorovainy
- 10 Yelizaveta Gallagher
- 12 David & Sue Bieber
- 20 Larry Gardner
- 25 Polina Novitskaya
- 26 Betsy Begian
- 27 Rita Mudrenko
- Jaden Valencia

Many Years!
Mnogaya Leta!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY NATASHA



PRAYER LIST

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

- Patricia Starkey
- Jamie Arango
- Ann Garza
- Marilyn Bezkorovainy
- Rose Kurowski
- Anna Michkofsky
- Frank Kulik
- Vickie Kulik

May Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Physician of our souls and bodies, reach out his healing hand and bless these, His servants.

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

June 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 <p>Mark your calendars . . . SS Peter and Paul Luncheon Sunday, June 30, 2019 following Divine Liturgy Contact: Heather Pfeiffer</p>						1 5:00pm Vespers
2 Blind Man 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy FOCA Meeting	3	4	5 Leavetaking Pascha Forefeast Ascension 6:00pm Vespers	6 ASCENSION of Our Lord 9:00am Divine Liturgy	7	8 5:00pm Vespers
9 Fathers of the 1st Ecumenical Council 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Luncheon for Archbishop BENJAMIN	10	11 Holy Apostles Bartholomew and Barnabas 6:00 Parish Council Meeting	12 13 14 15 Mark your calendars . . . JUNE 8-9, 2019 ARCHPASTORAL VISIT OF HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP BENJAMIN		14 Leavetaking Ascension	15 Marianica Icon 5:00pm Vespers
16 PENTECOST 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy <i>Kneeling Prayers</i> FATHERS DAY	17 Holy Spirit	18 3rd Day Holy Trinity	19 Holy Apostle Jude, Brother of the Lord	20 Hodogitria Icon at Mt. Athos	21	22 Leavetaking Pentecost 5:00pm Vespers
FAST—FREE WEEK						
23 All Saints 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy MBAS Meeting	24 Nativity of St. John the Baptist Beginning of SS Peter & Paul Fast	25	26 Tikvin and Sedmiyezerskaya Icon	27	28 "Three Hands" Icon	29 Holy Apostles Peter & Paul 9:00am Divine Liturgy 5:00pm Vespers
30 All Saints of America 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy SS Peter and Paul Luncheon	1 2 3 4 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.				5 Ven Athanasius of Athos Relics of Ven Sergius of Radonezh	6 5:00pm Vespers