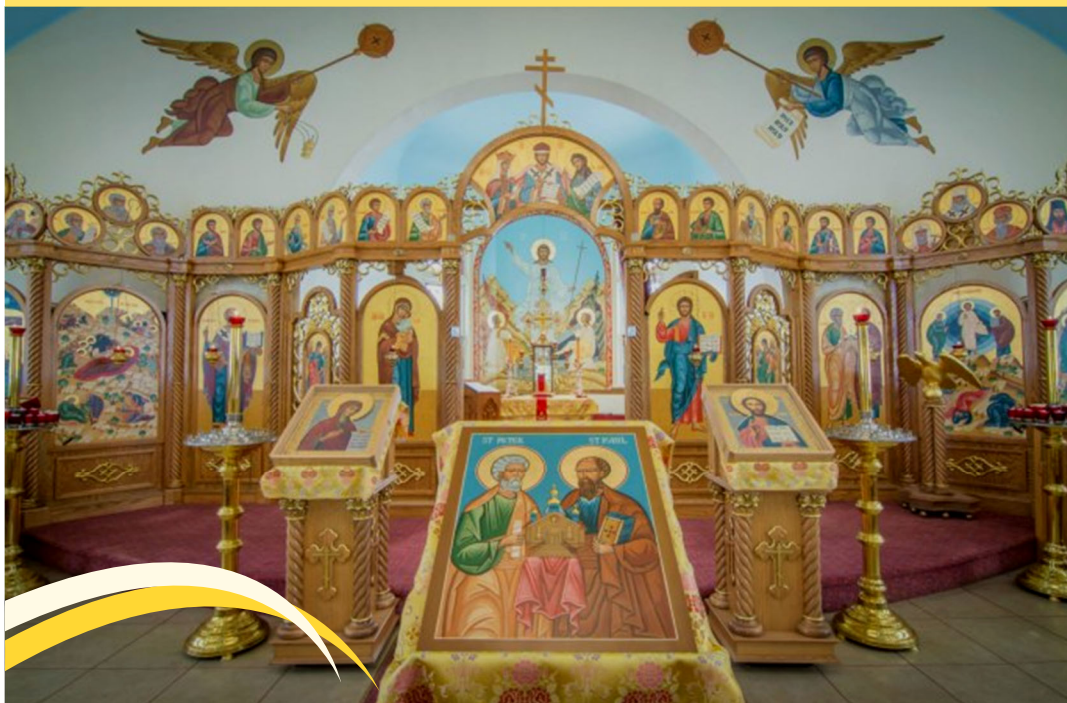


Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church

July 23, 2023



7th Sunday After Pentecost

*Martyrs Trophimus,
Theophilus, and 13 others
in Lycia (4th c.)*

Divine Liturgy Readings

(Readings on Back)

- ◆ Romans 15:1-7
- ◆ Matthew 9:27-35

Announcements:

Vespers Cancelled

There will not be vespers next Saturday due to the Sharber wedding in Parma.

Mark Your Calendars

Archbishop Daniel will be at our parish on Saturday, September 9 to celebrate Divine Liturgy and present Fr Basil Stoyka the mitre.

Festival Preparation Dates

Monday, July 24: 9:00am - Boil Cabbage, 12:30pm - Roll Cabbage

Wed, August 16: 9:00am - Boil Cabbage, 12:30 - Roll Cabbage

Thurs, August 17: Noon - Hall setup / Cabbage & Noodles / Beef Stroganoff

Friday, August 18: Tent / Bar Setup. Festival Beings (time TBA)

Sat, August 19: 2nd Day of Festival

Our festival is a lot of work, but also our largest fundraiser. Please plan on helping out as much as you can! Teamwork makes the dream work!

This Week

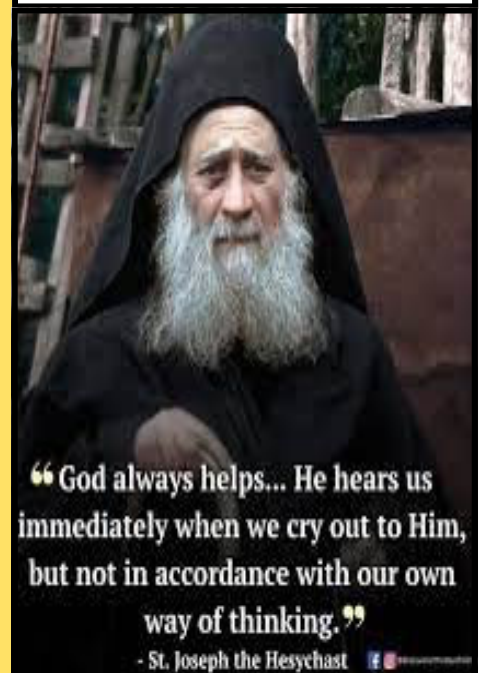
Saturday, July 29

NO VESPERS

Sunday, July 30

9:00am - 3rd & 6th Hours

9:30am - Divine Liturgy



“God always helps... He hears us immediately when we cry out to Him, but not in accordance with our own way of thinking.”

- St. Joseph the Hesychast

Meditation on Today's Gospel

It has never been hard to find people who view Jesus Christ in a many different ways. Some use His name as a curse word or otherwise mock Him. Some make Him in their own image as an advocate of whatever agenda they prize most in life. Some view Him as a teacher or prophet to be admired, but not as the Son of God to be worshiped. Today's gospel reading presents Him in a radically different way as One Who restores sight to blind beggars and the ability to speak to a man who had been possessed by a demon. Christ is not simply a miracle worker, of course, but the Savior of the world Who, as St. Paul wrote, has welcomed us for the glory of God.

In today's gospel reading, the Lord also cast a demon out of a man and restored his ability to speak. This fellow was a Gentile, which is why the people responded, "Never was anything like this seen in Israel," while "the Pharisees said, 'He casts out demons by the prince of demons.'" St. Paul made clear to the Christians in Rome, both Jewish and Gentile in heritage, that "together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." No longer enslaved to idolatry with their mouths unable to glorify God, Gentiles may know and glorify the Lord every bit as much as the descendants of Abraham, for the ancient promises extend to all who have faith in the Messiah. The Holy Spirit has united the divided tongues of the tower of Babel such that people of all cultures



and backgrounds may join together in the praise of God as members of the household of faith.

Sight and speech are both profoundly important human abilities. Christ restored sight to many blind people and often used images of light, darkness, and vision to convey the good news of salvation. The point was not simply to describe the importance of seeing things in this world, but ultimately to call us to know Him through union in holiness from the depths of our souls. Precisely because she was so radiant with the divine light, the Theotokos could proclaim the prophetic words of the Magnificat, which begins: "My soul magnifies the Lord; And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; Because He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaid; For behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." She spoke truthfully in light of her spiritual clarity and experiential knowledge of God.

Except when we fall into hypocrisy, our words generally reveal the true state of our souls. Perhaps that is why the Scriptures contain many warnings about the dangers associated with running our mouths. We read in the Psalms, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips." (Ps. 141:3) Christ taught that we will have

to give an account for every idle word that we speak, "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." (Matt. 12:36) It is not what goes into our mouths, but what comes out of them that defiles us. (Matt. 15:11) As St. James wrote, the tongue is small, powerful, and very difficult to control: "It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell." (James 3:6) When we speak words of cursing, condemnation, and corruption, we reveal our spiritual blindness, our lack of full transparency before God.

Of course, we should monitor our speech as best we can, and it is better to keep our mouths shut when we have an evil thought about someone than to share it with them or others. More fundamentally, however, we should see our wicked words as a symptom of the sickness of our souls. In order to gain the spiritual integrity to speak only in ways that glorify God and bless others, the light of Christ must fill our hearts. We must become radiant with the gracious divine energies if we are to speak in a way that manifests the holiness of God.

Icon of the Mother of God "The Joy of All who Sorrow" (with coins)

The variety of icons of the Mother of God is amazing. Although some experts consider the total number to reach about seven hundred versions, no one knows for sure how many there really are. As the teaching says about the life of the Holy Virgin, "the icons of the Mother of God are like stars in the sky: only the Queen of Heaven herself knows their number." Sometimes copies of glorified icons appear that also become miraculous. When people praying before them are healed of serious illnesses, these new icons also become glorified. So it happened with the Joy of All Who Sorrow icon (with coins) in St Petersburg.

The first written mention of an icon bearing this name appeared in 1683. Its author was the court painter Ivan Bezmin. Five years later, a woman named Euphymia Petrovna Papina, sister of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Joachim (Savelov) was healed of a serious illness after praying before the image of the Mother of God "Joy of All Who Sorrow" located in the Transfiguration Church in Ordynka (Moscow). The miraculous healing took place on November 6, after which a celebration was established on that day in honor of the Joy of All Who Sorrow icon. The church where the miracle happened soon became famous in the capital. The love for the Joy of All Who Sorrow icon began to spread across Russia.

On July 23, 1888, thunderstorms developed in St. Petersburg and its surrounding area. A powerful lightning bolt struck the Chapel at the glass factory, setting fire to its interior walls, burning the icons, and utterly shattering the collection box, but not touching the Icon of the Mother of God. The thunderclap knocked the Icon to the floor. At the same moment, the image of the Mother of God, which time and smoke had severely darkened, seemed to lighten and become renewed. Moreover, somehow, twelve copper coins from the collection box affixed themselves to various spots on the Icon with no apparent reason—as evidence of a miracle of God.

After that remarkable accident, a church in honor of the miraculous icon was built on the site of the burnt chapel. The charred former chapel remained inside the large stone Russian style chapel, "encasing" it.

Prayers Appreciated for:

Living:

Mat. Priscilla, Priest Ian
Dn. Doug, Mat. Kathy
Dawn, Katherine,
Sam, Paula,
Marianne,
Suleiman, Steve

Departed:

Marianne

Tall Candles

Tall candles are currently out of stock, but should be shipping to us soon. See Fr Joseph to sponsor.

WEEKLY READINGS

Monday, July 24

St. Christina of Tyre
1 Corinthians 9:13-18
Matthew 16:1-6

Tuesday, July 25

Dormition of St. Anna, mother of the Theotokos
1 Cor. 10:5-12
Matthew 16:6-12

Wed, July 26

St. Jacob of Alaska
1 Cor. 10:12-22
Matthew 16:20-24

Thurs, July 27

St. Panteleimon
1 Cor. 10:28-11:7
Matthew 16:24-28

Friday, July 28

Apostles Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, and Parmenas of the 70
1 Cor. 11:8-22
Matthew 17:10-18

Saturday, July 29

Virgin Martyr Seraphima
Romans 13:1-10
Matthew 12:30-37

Tragically, less than 20 years later, the Revolution began, and the Joy of All Who Sorrow Church was demolished. The believers were able to hide the miraculous icon from the communists and secretly preserve it.



Today's Scripture Readings

Epistle: Romans 15:1-7

We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me." For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.

Gospel: Matthew 9:27-35

When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us!" And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you." And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, "See that no one knows it." But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country. As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never seen like this in Israel!" But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons." Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee!

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