



THE FORERUNNER
The Nativity of St. John the Baptist
 Orthodox Church O.C.A.
 420 Laura Street
 Philipsburg, PA 16866
 (814) 342-2011

Very Rev. John Horosky - Priest
 Mark Ammerman - Council President

October 2012
Glory Be to Jesus Christ!

Service Schedule

Oct 7

General Confession & Hours @ 9:30 AM
 Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 AM
 Special collection for Seminarian
 Coffee Hour following Liturgy
 Council Meeting

Oct 14

Hours @ 9:30 AM
 Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 AM
 Coffee Hour following Liturgy

Oct 21

Hours @ 9:30 AM
 Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 AM
 Coffee Hour following Liturgy

Oct 28

Hours @ 9:30 AM
 Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 AM
 Pot luck luncheon following Liturgy

Reader's Schedule

Hours

10/7 D. Edward Batchko
 10/14 Doug Donovan
 10/21 Mark Ammerman
 10/28 John Conkey

Epistle

D. Edward Batchko
 Doug Donovan
 Mark Ammerman
 John Conkey

Feast Days

10/1 Protection of Holy Theotokos
 10/18 Apostle Luke
 10/26 Great Martyr Demetrius



For private confession, call Father to make arrangements.

Remember in your prayers: Bishop MELCHISEDEK, Father Adam, Father Ted, Father Paul, Father Michael, Jennifer and Vincent, Larry Ammerman, Mary Ann Ammerman, Karen Blackburn, Chris Conkey, James Crites, Helen Czar, Joe Demchak, Mike Demchak, Steve Demchak, Eileen Donovan, Joe Edwards, Michael Evans, Bonnie Fetcenko, Jeffrey Fetcenko, Randy Fetcenko, Rose Marie Fetcenko, Yvonne Fetcenko, Olga Finlayson, Kenneth Finlayson, Jack Foster, Mary Foster, Harry Horosky, Evan Morgan, Richard Nakles, Anna Pennington, Karen Saupp, Harry Socie, Alexandria Stine, Karen Stine, Eleanor Sura, Holly Thompson, Andrew Tocimak, Irene Tocimak, Louise Tocimak, Walter Varagea, Delores Varagea.

“O Master, the all-sustainer, and Holy King, Who punishes, but reduces not to death, Who strengthens the failing, and raises the outcast, Who remedies the bodily sorrows of men, we pray unto Thee, O Our Lord, visit Thine infirm servants with Thy mercy; forgive them every transgression, voluntary and involuntary. Verily O Lord, send down from Heaven Thy healing power, touch the body, extinguish the fever, lessen the suffering and every infirmity of Thy servants, raise them decumbent, from sickness, and from the bed of evilness, make them whole and all-restored, return them to Thy Church well-pleasing and fulfilling Thy will. For it is of Thine own, to be merciful and to save us, O Lord, and unto Thee we send glory, to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Birthdays

Stan Demchak	10/07
Rhonda Demchak	10/10
Sarah Mason	10/11
Mary Foster	10/15
Joe Bartko	10/20
Linda Nolder	10/30
Helen Czar	10/31

Anniversaries

Mark and Jennifer Ammerman	October 6, 2007
Sarah and Charles Mason	October 6, 2002
Julie and Mark Blazosky	October 15, 2005
Mary Ann and Larry Ammerman	October 17, 1965

Today we welcome His Grace Bishop MELCHISEDEK who will award Father John the Jeweled Cross .
God grant you many years!

The icons of the Twelve Major Feasts were donated by Douglas and Shirley Donovan. *God grant you many years!*

Our Brother in Christ, Carl Mandel fell asleep in the Lord on September 13. *Memory Eternal.*

Thank you to all who helped to clean the church, rectory and to all who helped to prepare for today's dinner. *God grant you many years!*

To Help the Needy Matthew 25:35-40 *For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'*

- We will be collecting non-perishable food goods for the food bank from now until the end of December. You many take the items to the rectory. The boxes of food will be delivered to our community food bank in Philipsburg.
- The church school children will be collecting Toys for Tots. Donation can be dropped off at the rectory.
- We are also collecting coats or donations to purchase coats for the needy.

Did You Know.....The Communion Cloth

What is the purpose of the communion cloth? The Communion Cloth is a red napkin that is used to embrace the Body and Blood of Christ in the event of a mishap – if the precious Gifts should be spilled. There are different traditions in use in our churches concerning how the cloth is held; regardless, the cloth has a very important function and should be used carefully.

Let us approach the Chalice not only prayerfully but also with fear and trembling, absorbed in expectation of receiving the Holiest of the Holy Gifts. As we step forward in front of the chalice mindful not to interfere with the communicant before us, ever attentive that the precious Body and Blood of our Lord not be spilled by our careless movement, we should draw the cloth to our chin and open wide our mouth.

When an accident occurs at the time of receiving Holy Communion and the Holy Body and Blood of our Lord is not caught in the communion cloth, what it falls on must be burned. Let us ponder with the Noble Joseph of Arimathea as he helps Nicodemus to take the Lord down from the tree:

How shall I bury Thee, O my God?
How can I wrap Thee in a shroud?
How can I touch Thy most pure Body with my hands?
(Vespers of Great and Holy Friday, Aposticha)

How can I cause that the living Lord be burned? Although the spilling of the Gifts can occur accidentally, may we, by using the communion cloth properly, be spared the sorrow of being the cause of this through our negligence.

I found this article (anonymous) among some music Christine Demchak had given me. She would choke up and stop singing when we came to singing the Aposticha.

The Hanging Vigil above the Royal Doors of the iconostasis is supported by Irene Pollock in loving memory of her sister and brother-in-law Margaret and Robert Stefanko.

The Vigils on the Tetrapod are supported by Irene Pollock in loving memory of her parents, sisters, brothers, husband, nephew and stepfather.

The votives in front of the iconostasis, on the candlestands and in front of the icons in the nave are supported by Andrew & Louise Tocimak in loving memory of George Tocimak.

Angels and Evil Spirits.. All things visible and invisible *From the OCA Website on Doctrine*

In addition to the visible, physical creation there is an invisible world created by God. The Bible sometimes calls it “the heavens” and other times refers to it as “above the heavens.” Whatever its symbolical description in the Holy Scriptures, the invisible world is definitely not part of the physical, material universe. It does not exist in space; it has no physical dimensions. And so it cannot be located, and it has no “place” which can be “reached” by travel within the galaxies of the spatial, locatable “places” of the physically created universe. However, the fact that the invisible, created world is purely spiritual and is not discoverable on a map of the created material spaces makes it no less real or truly existing. The invisible creation exists as different from the created material universe and, of course, as totally different from the uncreated, absolutely super-divine existence of the uncreated God.

Invisible created reality consists of the hosts of bodiless powers, generally—and somewhat incorrectly—called the angels. **Angels** (which means literally “messengers”) are, strictly speaking, but one rank of the incorporeal or **bodiless powers** of the invisible world.

According to Orthodox Scripture and Tradition there are nine ranks of bodiless powers or the **Hosts** (**Sabaoth** means literally “armies” or “choirs” or “ranks”). There are **angels, archangels, principalities, powers, virtues, dominions, thrones, cherubim, and seraphim**. The latter are described as offering continual adoration and glory to God with the incessant and ever-resounding cry of Holy! Holy! Holy! (*Isa 6:3; Rev 4:8*). Those in the middle of the above listing are little-known to men while the angels and archangels are seen as the active workers, warriors, and messengers of Yahweh relative to this world. Thus, angels and archangels are seen to struggle against spiritual evil and to mediate between God and the world. They appear in various forms to men in both the Old and New Testaments as well as in the life of the Church. The angels are those who bring the power and presence of God and who are messengers of His word for the salvation of the world. The best-known of the angels are Gabriel (which means literally “man of God”), the bearer of the good news of Christ’s birth (*Dan 8:16; 9:21; Lk 1:19, 26*), and Michael (which means literally “who is like God”), the chief warrior of the spiritual armies of God (*Dan 11:13; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev 12:7*).

Generally speaking the appearances of the bodiless powers to men are described in a physical way (“six-winged, many-eyed”; or in the “form of a man”). However, it must be clearly understood that these are merely symbolical descriptions. By nature and definition the angels have no bodies and no material properties of any sort. They are strictly spiritual beings.

Evil Spirits In addition to the created spiritual powers who do the will of God, there are, according to the Orthodox faith, those who rebel against Him and do evil. These are the demons or devils (which means literally those who “pull apart” and destroy) who are also known both in the Old and New Testaments as well as in the lives of the saints of the Church.

Satan (which means literally the enemy or the adversary) is one proper name for the devil, the leader of the evil spirits. He is identified in the serpent symbol of Gen 3 and as the tempter of both Job and Jesus (*Job 1:6; Mk 1:33*). He is labelled by Christ as a deceiver and liar, the “father of lies” (*Jn 8:44*) and the “prince of this world” (*Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11*). He has “fallen from heaven” together with his evil angels to do battle with God and his servants (*Lk 10:18; Isa 14:12*). It is this same Satan who “entered Judas” to effect the betrayal and destruction of Christ (*Lk 22:3*).

The apostles of Christ and the saints of the Church knew from direct experience Satan’s powers against man for Man’s own destruction. They knew as well Satan’s lack of power and his own ultimate destruction when man is with God, filled with the Holy Spirit of Christ. According to Orthodox doctrine there is no middle road between God and Satan. Ultimately, and at any given moment, man is either with God or the devil, serving one or the other.

The ultimate victory belongs to God and to those with Him. Satan and his hosts are finally destroyed. Without this recognition—and still more—the experience of this reality of the cosmic spiritual struggle (God and Satan, the good angels and the evil angels), one cannot truly be called an Orthodox Christian who sees and lives according to the deepest realities of life. Once again, however, it must be clearly noted that the devil is not a “red-suited gentleman” nor any other type of grossly-physical tempter. He is a subtle, intelligent spirit who acts mostly by deceit and hidden actions, having as his greatest victory man’s disbelief in his existence and power. Thus, the devil attacks “head-on” only those whom he can deceive in no other way: Jesus and the greatest of the saints. For the greatest part of his warfare he is only too satisfied to remain concealed and to act by indirect methods and means.

Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. (1 Pet 5:8) Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Eph 6:11-12).

“Surely he has taken our infirmities and borne our diseases.”

This issue of the Handmaiden on Illness and Healing is a very personal one. I began contemplating the nature of healing from an Orthodox Christian perspective when my beloved father was diagnosed with esophageal cancer four years ago. While I had my share of anxiety and grief, I felt an almost overwhelming sense that everything was going to be okay.

My dad Jerry was an incredible person, full of integrity, love, and mercy. In fact, both of my brothers separately told me that if they don't know what to do in a difficult situation, they ask themselves, “What would my father do?” Interestingly, my dad wasn't a believer. In fact, it was only when I became an Orthodox Christian that he thought Orthodoxy was something he could probably buy into”. He said our faith felt credible to him. It made sense.

I remember sharing with my priest and his wife. “I have the deepest sense that my dad is going to be healed, but I don't know how to share my faith with him.” Was I in for a surprise! My father was healed, healed of unbelief and of a myriad of emotional wounds through the outpouring of love and support he received from friends and family over the course of the year that he suffered.

But he wasn't healed physically. He died ten months after his initial diagnosis. In fact, the more people prayed, the more complications arose and the sicker he became. His downward spiral felt surreal. Because I work for Conciliar Press, I am blessed to be in contact with priests all over the country. And I'm telling you people prayed. Cards and phone calls, prayers and good thoughts flew across the country and into eternity. A world-class surgeon operated on him, yet my dad suffered one complication after another. All the efforts of surgeons and doctors ultimately weren't able to restore my dad to health.

My dad suffered excruciating pain. He was hurt and baffled. Yet his peace endured. My dad suffered with so much dignity. Fr. Thomas Zell, my manager, would visit with my dad, and was impressed with his character and patience. He gave my father an icon, which he stared at for hours on end. This icon was the only object that moved with him from room to room. He had a yearlong journey of suffering, and yet he died a Christian. How could I not say he had been healed?

After my dad died, I cried every day for ten months, because I missed him so much. But all that time I maintained a deep sense of peace and well-being. How I could grieve and be at peace almost simultaneously was a mystery to me.

So now I have a different perspective on faith and healing. Some people are healed physically, some are healed emotionally and spiritually, but everyone is touched by God's healing power. God's answer to our prayers is just not always what we want. I wanted my dad to be physically healed in the worst way, but it wasn't God's plan. And God is good.

Dame Julian of Norwich, a medieval Mystic (1360-1426) who had a series of visions while she was very ill saw that whatever God does is all done in Love. She therefore concluded. “All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well.”

At a recent conference at my parish on the topic, “Christ the Healer,” Fr. Thomas Hopko encouraged us not to fixate only on physical health and happiness:

To those of us who belong to Jesus, and those who are in Him, we already participate in His healing power. Being raised from the dead in this world brings a tremendous suffering to us, but it is not neurotic or diseased; it is healthy suffering. So what the cross tells us is that if we unite our wounds to His wounds, our madness to His sanity, our understanding of health and life to His, we can already live, now in this fallen world, according to the total health of the age to come. We can even transfigure bodily illness, human suffering into a victory of God, which becomes a real sign of health.

Prayer

Lord, Jesus Christ, who suffered and died for our sins that we may live, if during our life we have sinned in word, deed or thought, forgive us in Your goodness and love. All our hope we put in You; protect your servant from all evil. We submit to Your will, and into Your hands we commend our souls and bodies. We pray to You, O Lord, for a Christian end to our lives, peaceful, without shame and suffering, and for a good account before the awesome judgment seat of Christ. Bless us, be merciful to us, and grant us life eternal. Amen.