



THE FORERUNNER

The Nativity of St. John the Baptist

Orthodox Church o.c.a.

420 Laura Street

Philipsburg, PA 16866

(814) 342-2011

<http://nativityofstjohn-oca.org>

Very Rev. John Horosky - Priest

John Conkey - Council President

June 2015

Glory Be to Jesus Christ!

Service Schedule

June 7 All Saints

General Confession @ 9:30 AM
Hours @ 9:45 AM
Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 AM
Coffee Hour following Liturgy
Council Meeting

June 14 Regional All Saints

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

June 21 Father's Day

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

June 28

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

Reader's Schedule

Hours	Epistle
6/7 Doug Donovan	Doug Donovan
6/14 Tom Demchak	Mark Ammerman
6/21 John Conkey	John Conkey
6/28 Doug Donovan	Doug Donovan

Feasts & Saints

6/1	Holy Spirit Day
6/4	Martha and Mary
6/7	All Saints
6/14	Regional All Saints Elisha
6/24	Nativity of St. John the Baptist
6/29	Holy Apostles Peter & Paul



Birthdays

Karen Blackburn	6/02
Vincent Ammerman	6/08
Garret McGraw	6/12

Anniversaries

Mary and Jack Foster	June 18, 1970
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Remember in your prayers: Archbishop MELCHISEDEK, Father John, Father Adam, Father Ted, Father Paul, Father Michael, Father Andrew, Father John, Matushka Judy Horosky, Matushka Ksenia Batchko, Larry Ammerman, Mary Ann Ammerman, Jen Ammerman and Victor, Karen Blackburn, Matthew Boroughf, Chris Conkey, John Conkey, James Crites, Helen Czar, Eugene Demchak, Joe Demchak, Mike Demchak, Steve Demchak, Kari Donovan, Matthew Donovan, Michael Evans, Bonnie Fetcenko, Randy Fetcenko, Rose Marie Fetcenko, Olga Finlayson, Kenneth Finlayson, Jack Foster, Mary Foster, Harry Horosky, Alexandra Mamrak, Eugene Minarich, Evan Morgan, Richard Nakles, Gloria Rice, Mary Sura Saupp, Harry Socie, Alexandra Stine, Karen Stine, Eleanor Sura, Andrew Tocimak, Irene Tocimak, Louise Tocimak, Walter Varagea, Delores Varagea, Patricia Wood

“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

From the Desk of Father John:

Christ in One Another

by Fr. Vladimir Berzonsky <http://oca.org/reflections/berzonsky/christ-in-one-another>

“Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, ‘Peace be with you!’” (John 20:19)

When we think of the apostles gathered together, we conjure up the icon of the Last Supper. It crests every Royal Gate of our icon screens; or perhaps we think of them with the flames of fire above each, receiving the Holy Spirit on the great day of Pentecost. Maybe it would help us more to consider what it was that drew them together on that first Sunday of a new beginning for the universe, assembling to share their anguish over what happened to the Master and what may just be waiting for them. They had a common problem. We usually have personal reasons for communal comfort. It may be that we don’t think of one another assembled for Divine Liturgy, or for the possibility that we can or even should care to help each other. So much the shame.

The apostles came not expecting a blessing, yet they were overwhelmed by the Source of all blessings, Christ Himself. Do we have the faith to attend the sacred services expecting a grace refreshment and a spiritual uplift? Or do we consider the form such blessings come in? ‘Peace!’ He said to them. Is it what they wanted? Or felt they needed? Could not one of them have quoted the Bible they all knew so well: “Oh, that I had wings like a dove....” They must have had their own solutions to the trauma they were experiencing. If He could not defend them or make them invincible, then He could spirit them away to Galilee, their home grounds. But all He offered was peace—and indeed, it was all they needed.

So it is for us—or should be. We may come to church praying for a better or different job, inspiration to pass some exam, healing for a loved one, maybe an opportunity to leave our situation and find a new life for ourselves. What is it Christ offers us? The same gift of peace. It implies that what is troubling us is the unsettling state of our souls. All the ingredients for a wholesome, complete life are within us. We may be praying for the wrong things—escape, outside help, a windfall of funds—none of them will be of spiritual benefit. What we need is salvation.

And that peace was felt and shared by all ten [Judas committing suicide; Thomas elsewhere]. Yes, of course it came from Jesus, but the Spirit permeated the group. So it is with the congregation of the faithful. When the celebrant faces the people of God and offers them the peace of Christ, it should be felt throughout the assembly. Lord forbid that we become a random gathering of individuals, each absorbed by his or her own interests. How lonely are the crowds in a mall or on any city street nowadays. What has cell phones wrought! I dread the day when our churches will have signs posted in the vestibules: KINDLY SHUT OFF ALL CELL PHONES AND VOICE RECORDERS. May it be that regardless of how much our communicants conform to the standards of secular society, they will always realize that we belong to one another in Christ, we are all fixed on the Kingdom of God, and we are all committed to sharing the same Holy Spirit Who bonds us into a precious unity with the Holy Trinity.

Fr. John Oliver, the priest of St. Elizabeth Orthodox Christian Church in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, has released *Giver of Life* through Paraclete Press. The book tackles a topic not easily grasped, that of the Church's teaching on the Person of the Holy Spirit. An experienced communicator, Fr. John has authored the Conciliar Press story *Touching Heaven* and has been an Ancient Faith Radio podcaster since 2007. However, he says that writing *Giver of Life* proved to be a different experience altogether, and in an interview with the editors of [antiochian.org](http://www.antiochian.org), he explains why.

1. *The Holy Spirit seems at times to be the most neglected Person within the Holy Trinity. Tell us what motivated you to write about Him in this book.*

Actually, the idea for *Giver of Life* was not mine. Paraclete Press, the publisher, contacted me about writing a book for a series they were doing on the role of Holy Spirit in various traditions. They asked if I'd consider writing the Orthodox perspective. Since it's such an enormous and lofty topic, with which I have very little personal experience, I didn't agree to it at first.

But Paraclete said some things that led me to accept the project - they were looking for something introductory; they were fine with lots of direct references to the Church fathers; and they hoped for a book that was specifically devotional in nature. So, *Giver of Life* is not an academic book, and it's certainly nowhere close to being any definitive text on the Holy Spirit in the Orthodox tradition. Rather, it's a reflection on what the Orthodox believe about the Holy Spirit and how He changes our lives. You mention that the Holy Spirit seems to be the most neglected Person within the Holy Trinity.

Interestingly, Fr Sophrony Sakharov, in his book on St Silouan, suggests that that neglect may be partly the Holy Spirit's design. Here's what Fr Sophrony says: "The Holy Spirit heals us from the consequences of the fall, regenerates us and hallows us, but all this He accomplishes in an invisible manner, like some marvelous diffident Friend Who does not want to burden us with gratitude to Him. The great blessedness of knowing Him comes gradually.

2. *The description on your publisher Paraclete's website tells us that your book "Presents the Orthodox perspective on who the Holy Spirit is, where the mystery of God comes alive." In a nutshell, just what is the Orthodox perspective on the Holy Spirit, and how does it differ from other Christian traditions?*

The Orthodox perspective on the Holy Spirit is really rooted, in part, in wonder. Humanity knows nothing of God apart from what He chooses to reveal to us, and what He has revealed is wondrous - such love, such overwhelming, universal, transfiguring, personal love!

The Orthodox believe that the Holy Spirit is not impersonal, but personal; that He is not an independent object of study, but of one essence and will and power with the Father and the Son; that He uniquely proceeds from the Father alone; and that the person in whom the Holy Spirit is present will necessarily call upon God as "Father," upon Jesus as "Lord," upon Mary as "Theotokos," and will see the human being and all of creation as sacred and the Church as the sole ark of salvation.

One way this Orthodox perspective differs from other Christian traditions is that the Orthodox believe that the Holy Spirit illuminates the whole content of salvation, rather than isolate and emphasize a particular part. For example, the Orthodox see the Holy Spirit as opening a door on the mystery of the Holy Trinity, while some traditions see the Holy Spirit as opening a door only on Himself; the Orthodox see the Holy Spirit as revealing deep truths about the Father and the Son and Mary and the Church, while some traditions see the Holy Spirit as generally detached from those other aspects of the Christian faith; the Orthodox see the Holy Spirit as transfiguring the whole of a person, while some traditions see the Holy Spirit as transfiguring a person mostly in body, with certain evidences such as tongues or tears or physical convulsions.

3. *Why do we use green at Pentecost, and what does this teach us about the Holy Spirit?*

Yes, Orthodox faithful around the world harvest and bring verdant life into the churches for Pentecost. As a liturgical celebration, the feast of Pentecost is lovely. Winter, with its deadening blanket, yields to spring, and Pentecost almost always falls during spring. Orthodox Christians around the world harvest and bring new greenery of all kinds into the churches—ferns, sprigs, branches, flowers, palms, herbs, even trees.

The splash of green foliage is designed to call to mind not just life but also a special kind of life. It is the life that transcends biological existence and flows from the very Godhead Itself; it is the life that is actually a state of being—immortal, everlasting, changeless. Ferns and flowers fade and die, but souls filled with this "life from above" flourish

forever.

So, why greenery? Not because of the life that ferns and flowers have, but because of the life toward which they point. Pentecost is a particular kind of celebration, for it celebrates a particular kind of life - the Holy Spirit, the "Giver of life" as the Orthodox prayer calls Him, descends upon the Church and gives Himself.

4. *What are the most popular misconceptions about the Third Person of the Godhead? What are the most comforting and vital aspects of His Personality?*

One misconception about the Third Person of the Godhead is that He is not a Person at all. That is to say, some Christians believe He is simply an impersonal force or energy or bond of love between the Father and the Son that they, in turn, share with the rest of us. Such a belief destroys, of course, our whole understanding of the Trinity. Another misconception is that the Holy Spirit contradicts Himself - that, in different eras and places, He reveals truths that nullify truths He has revealed in the past. This has been called "process theology" - the idea that the truths of God are always in the process of changing, growing, and adapting. For example, some believe that the Holy Spirit who inspired St Paul's passages on male-female marriage is the same Spirit who inspires churches to affirm same-sex marriages today.

This touches on the second part of your question. The very stillness - or state of being - of the Holy Spirit is certainly part of what is most comforting and vital about Him. The sainthood toward which He inspired the apostles is the same sainthood toward which He inspires persons today. He who changes us does not change Himself.

5. *In the "Oh heavenly King" prayer, we invite the Holy Spirit into our lives. Is this, in some ways, a dangerous prayer? How can we know the Spirit is with us in our homes, our work, our prayer?*

Dangerous, yes, in that the Holy Spirit comes to slay our old nature that refuses to die easily. For anyone who has ever tried, dying to self is often a messy, painful process. G.K. Chesterton had it right when he said that the problem with Christianity is not that it has been tried and found wanting; the problem is that it has been found difficult, and left untried.

One helpful way to understand the work of the Holy Spirit is by His fruit as listed in the fifth chapter of Galatians. Rather than consider individual areas of our lives - home life, work life, etc - looking for evidence of the Holy Spirit, another approach is consider our lives as one seamless integrated pursuit of the Holy Spirit. Then, as we acquire the Holy Spirit, He brings His love, His joy, His peace, etc, through us into the various areas of our lives.

Consider, for example, the counsel of St. Seraphim of Sarov: "Acquire the Spirit of peace, and a thousand souls around you will be saved." At first pass, we might hear St. Seraphim saying: be more peaceful; become a peaceful person; go and do peaceful things. Armed with what we believe to be his advice, we might fill our time with charitable projects and good deeds and breathing exercises. Notice, however, that St. Seraphim did not say to us to acquire peace. Instead, he directs us to acquire the Spirit.

The Orthodox prayer to the Holy Spirit refers to Him as the "Treasury of blessings," so to reach for the fruit of Galatians 5 instead of reaching for the Spirit is to grasp for the blessings without having acquired the Treasury. It's like trying to live like God apart from God. The goal of Christian life is not to force our behavior to fit categories of "love," "joy," "peace," and the rest - if that were true, Christian experience would merely be an external gloss, like adding a fresh coat of paint to a house that really needs a new foundation. We would be working on the wrong problem.

We all recognize the futility of trying to improve behavior without taming the heart. The Christian may go to church and sing hymns and give alms and adorn the world with plentiful evidence of his faith, yet still fly into a rage when provoked or seethe with jealousy when slighted or burn with lust when aroused or swell with pride when praised. So, some deeper change is needed.

Christian life is about becoming a new creation in Christ; it's the daily renewal of the inward man (II Corinthians 5:17 and 4:16). It is to follow St. Seraphim's advice to acquire not peace in and of itself, but the Spirit of peace. Such inner renewal brings the heart under the control of the Holy Spirit, who then releases the attributes of Galatians 5 through us according to His time, His measure, His purpose, and His glory.

BBQ 2015

Thank you to all who helped in any way to make our chicken BBQ so successful.



Cookie Makers



Cookie Inspectors



Smoke Eaters

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 candle stands and in front of the icons in the nave are supported by Andrew & Louise Tocimak in loving memory of the Tocimak family.

Orthodox Christians in North America (1794 - 1994)

Written by Mark Stokoe and the Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky.

<http://oca.org/history-archives/orthodox-christians-na>

In a nation whose religious culture has accommodated Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, Orthodox Christians in North America have been largely overlooked and ignored. With few exceptions, their historical experiences remain unrecorded, their documents untranslated, their personalities, institutions, and activities unknown.

Contemporary American Orthodoxy is the result of the Russian missionaries to Alaska, but also of the migration of peoples from Central and Eastern Europe and the Middle East. As a result, it often presents an "ethnic" face to American society. Building on an earlier pioneering historical work, *Orthodox America* (compiled for the 1976 American Bicentennial), the present work seeks to provide the reader, both Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike, with a popular narrative account of two hundred years of Orthodox Christianity on this continent.

From its humble beginnings in 1794, when a small group of missionaries landed on Kodiak Island, Alaska, Orthodoxy in America has expanded to comprise a church of over two million faithful. Yet numerous Americans from all cultural and religious backgrounds have, particularly in recent decades, joined Orthodoxy as well. Orthodoxy does have something to say to American society.

You can read this book on-line at the above URL, or download a pdf of the book from the same page.

Mission Statement of the Orthodox Church in America

<http://oca.org/about/mission-vision>



The Mission of the Orthodox Church in America, the local autocephalous Orthodox Church, is to be faithful in fulfilling the commandment of Christ to “Go into all the world and make disciples of all Nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all [things that He has] commanded” so that all people may be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth:

To preach, in accordance with God’s will, the fullness of the gospel of the Kingdom to the peoples of North America and to invite them to become members of the Orthodox Church.

To utilize for her mission the various languages of the peoples of this continent.

To be the body of Christ in North America and to be faithful to the tradition of the Holy Orthodox Church.

To witness to the truth, and by God’s grace and in the power of the Holy Spirit, to reveal Christ’s way of sanctification and eternal salvation to all.

Adopted by the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America, 1990.