



Weekly Bulletin

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

A Community of the Orthodox Church in America

Witnessing to the Apostolic Faith in Lake County for over 44 Years

Father Andrew Clements, Pastor

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Number 15

Sunday	Apr 15	<i>2nd Sunday of Pascha / Tone 1 / St Thomas Sunday</i>		
		9:00 am	Church School	
		10:00 am	Divine Liturgy	Coffee Hour
Saturday	Apr 21	<i>Hieromartyr Theodore</i>		
		4:00 pm	Sapp / Radziej Memorial	Reception
		5:30 pm	Great Vespers	
Sunday	Apr 22	<i>3rd Sunday of Pascha / Tone 2 / The Myrrhbearing Women</i>		
		Readings:	Acts 6:1-7	Mk 15:43-16:8
		9:00 am	Church School	
		10:00 am	Divine Liturgy / Schlafer Baptism	Coffee Hour

EVENING ADULT CLASS

The Class will resume on Tuesday, April 17 at 7:00 pm.

ST JAMES SOUP KITCHEN

We are providing Lunch at St James this coming Saturday, April 21 beginning at 10:00 pm. Everyone is welcomed to participate.

SAPP / RADZIEJ MEMORIAL

The One Year Memorial for Betty & Tamara will take place this Saturday, April 21 at 4:00 pm. A reception will follow in the hall.

IN OUR PRAYERS

Please keep Michael David Schlafer and family in your prayers this week as he prepares for his Baptism next Sunday during the Liturgy.

PRAYER CORNER + + + + +

Eleanor Alexander (Tom's mom), Perry (Capitan), Sbdcn Leonard, Kathy (Denise F's sis), Jim (Ruth's dad), John (Adam's nephew), Ted Geletka, (Fr's frnd), Alex Dzura, infant Julian, John Clements, Willie (Elena G's son), Sarah Crivella, Darlene (Mary V's csn), Donald Starr (Scott C's fr-n-lw), Denise Fross, Mary Georges (Peter's mom), Nancy, (Ruth B's frnd), Andy Dzura, suffering Christians in Ukraine and the Middle East.

Anniversaries: Daniel & Tina Rausch (4/21).

Birthdays: Robyn Lannon (4/16), Isaac Bagley (4/18), Greg Kochan (4/20).

Newborns: Cooper (Jimmy & Heather), Henry (Fred & Faith), Michael David (Cole & Sarah), Nina Margaret (Matt & Krista), Andrew James (James & Lisa).

Expecting: Alexandr & Olga, Chad & Meredith, Matt

& Michelle, Tom & Miranda, Mitch & Winnie, Brian & Nicole, Jon & Larissa.

Our Seminarian: Brian Crivella & Family.

Newly Illumined: Cami (Tetiana) Price, Stephanie Iorga.

Memory Eternal: Regina Ryan (Lisa's grandmother Archpriest Paul Ziatik (3/5).

“Why do you seek the living among the dead? Why do you mourn the incorrupt amid corruption?” To the unbeliever, it may indeed seem like a mirage; he hears only words, he sees only incomprehensible ceremonies, and he understands them only outwardly. But for believers, all of this radiates from within, and not as proof of his faith, but as its result, as its life in the world, in the soul, in history. Therefore the darkness and sadness of Holy Friday is for us something real, alive, contemporary; we can cry at the cross and experience everything that took place in that triumph of evil, treachery, cowardice, and betrayal; we can contemplate the life-bearing tomb on Holy Saturday with excitement and hope. And therefore, every year we can celebrate Pascha, the Resurrection. For Pascha is not the remembrance of an event in the past. It is the real encounter in happiness and joy, with him whom our hearts long ago knew and encountered as the life and light of all light. Pascha night testifies that Christ is alive and with us, and that we are alive with him. The entire celebration is an invitation to look at the world and life, and to behold the dawning of the mystical day of the Kingdom of light. “Today the scent of Spring begins,” sings the church, “and the new creation exults...” It exults in faith, in love and in hope.

— Fr Alexander Schmemmann —

In a State of Grace

by Dcn George Shumaik

“How do Orthodox Christians know when they are in a state of Grace?” A catechumen recently posed this question during a discussion of the Faith. It is a phrase commonly used by Roman Catholics and many describe the relationship of God to humanity. There is significant variability in defining this state of Grace ranging from “the absence of sin” to “the unmerited favor of God”. Implicit in all these constructs is that in some fashion God can bestow or withdraw his Grace from his creatures. The Orthodox understanding of Grace begins with the Holy Trinity. We believe in one God existing in three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This existence is beyond our meager understanding of tangible reality. He is the “I Am” who is “ineffable, inconceivable, invisible, incomprehensible, ever-existing and eternally the same.” (Anaphora of St John Chrysostom) We know God through His energies through which He distributes His benevolent economy to His creation.

These energies are not an abstract characteristic of God but are God Himself, uncreated and eternal. We are the pinnacle of God’s work and have life in us only because of His love. Because He desired sons and daughters, not slaves or robots, we are gifted our own free will. We were created for communion with God but have chosen to fall away into sin because we seek gratification in pursuit of our own desires. We believe that God is continually active in His creation. He has chosen not to turn His face away from our affliction but has sent His Son to deliver us from the wages of sin that is death. “And of His fullness we have all received, and Grace for Grace. For the law was given through Moses, but Grace and Truth came through Jesus Christ”. (John 1:16-17)

Grace is a gift of God unmerited by any human activity. In that sense we are continually in a state of Grace. The problem is that our behavior is to repeatedly reject the gift! Grace is nevertheless always present and accessible. He is always at the door knocking (Revelation 3:20) but does not enter by force. The Orthodox Church holds no doctrine of “irresistible Grace”. The relationship between the Grace of God and the free will of man is one of

cooperation or synergy. Saint Paul declares, “We are fellow workers with God.” (1Corinthians 3:9) This is why there is no dichotomy between faith and works in Orthodoxy - they are synergistic. “You will know them by their fruits”. (Matthew 7:16) “Faith without works is dead.” (James 2:17) We have archetypes of synergy to follow starting with Christ Himself who prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” (Luke 22:42) We honor His Mother Mary and proclaim her as “Theotokos, full of Grace!” She is accounted first among the Saints for as a young girl, a virgin; possessing the same humanity as us, agreed of her own free will to bear the child who would save the world. We have the lives of the Holy Martyrs and Saints to serve as guideposts of devotion to the point of death as witnesses to the Faith.

The sacramental life of the Orthodox Church provides a pathway for the restoration of our communion with God Himself. They are a means of accepting the gift of God’s Grace. At the Last Supper, Jesus explicitly says “Do this in remembrance of Me!” In the Divine Liturgy, we offer up that which we possess only by the Grace of God – the bread, the wine and most importantly ourselves – so that by partaking of the Holy Eucharist we might invite Christ to live within us. There is no merit to be gained in this act in the eyes of God. It is not God who changes in His relationship with us, but we who pray that we would change in our relationship with Him. We have all received a “wedding garment” at our Baptism. We have “put on Christ”. We are invited to the banquet of salvation but are not forced to attend. We can reject the Grace of God or heed the prayer of the Apostle Peter: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature...” (2Peter 1:2-4) Amen.