



# Weekly Bulletin

## St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

A Community of the Orthodox Church in America

*Celebrating our 50th Year witnessing to the Apostolic Faith in Lake County*

*Father Andrew Clements, Pastor*

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<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Sept 24</b>	<i>16th Sndy aft Pentecost / Tone 7 / New Martyrs Juvenaly &amp; Peter the Aleut</i>	
		9:00 am	Church School
		10:00 am	Divine Liturgy      Coffee Hour
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sept 30</b>	<i>Eve of the Protection of the Theotokos</i>	
		4:00 pm	Parish Memorial      Reception
		5:30 pm	Great Vespers      Confession
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Oct 1</b>	<i>16th Sndy aft Pentecost / Tone 8 / The Protection of the Theotokos</i>	
		Readings:	Heb 9:1-7      Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28
		9:00 am	Church School
		10:00 am	Divine Liturgy      Coffee Hour

### ATTENDANCE / STEWARDSHIP / Sep 17

Attendance	160
Operating	5,275.00
OCA	170.00
Maintenance	38.00
Icons	35.00
Charities	15.00
Uganda	60.00

### TODAY IS PLEDGE SUNDAY

Hopefully we're all prayerfully attending to this.

### PARISH MEMORIAL

On Saturday, Sept 30 at 4:00 pm, all the Parish Members who have been buried from our Church will be commemorated by name at a Memorial Service. A Reception will follow in the Hall.

### SPECIAL COLLECTION

Please be generous next Sunday, Oct 1 when we will be collecting funds for our Diocesan Seminarians. We now have a vested interest in this with our own Cole Schlafer being one of eleven seminarians from our Diocese.

### RETREAT WITH FR STEPHEN FREEMAN

Please mark your calendars for Saturday, Nov 4 when will have the distinct opportunity to hear Fr Stephen Freeman speak. There will be three sessions on Saturday with Lunch and Fr Stephen will be the preacher at our Liturgy on Nov 5.

### ANNIVERSARY BANQUET

Tickets are for sale during Coffee Hour for our celebration event on Sunday, October 15 honoring our 50th Anniversary.

### PRAYER CORNER + + + + +

Perry (Capitan), Julian, Sarah Crivella, Joella (LuAnn D's dghtr), Paris Santone (Debbie Covelli's nephew), Anna Como, Barb (Renda frnd), Nick Covelli, David Campbell (Deb's bro), Theresa, Bernice, (Maryann S's frnds), the suffering Christians in Ukraine and the Middle East, those suffering in Morocco.

**Anniversaries:** Kevyn & Pamela Roth (9/28).

**Birthdays:** Silvia Nicoletti (9/25), Dale Fross (9/27), Thomas Oberhausen (9/30).

**Newborns:** Sophronia (Maxim & Mindy), Holden (Collin & Laiken), Esther (Stephen & Rebecca), Patrick III (Patrick & Elizabeth), Henry Jude (Peter & Caitlin).

**Newly United:** Drew & Tess, Joseph & Venessa, Jacob & Allison, Jonathan & Alexandra.

**Newly Illumined:** Raphael (9/17).

**Newly Departed:** Frank Sheranko (21 yr anniversary), Joanna Mihalik (Debbie Covelli's cousin, 9/22).

## Celebrating our 50th Anniversary

# Mary as the “Secret Joy” of the Church

by Fr Stephen Freeman

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann wrote:

...When investigating the history of Mariological piety, one discovers that it is rooted not in any special revelation but, primarily, in the experience of liturgical worship. In other terms, it is not a theological reflection on Mary that gave birth to her veneration: it is the liturgy as the experience of “heaven on earth,” as communion with and the knowledge of heavenly realities, as an act of love and adoration, that little by little revealed the unique place of Christ’s Mother in both the economy of salvation and the mystery of the “world to come.” Mary is not part of the Church’s kerygma [public preaching], whose only content is Christ. She is the inner secret of the Church as communion with Christ. The Church preaches Christ, not Mary. But communion with Christ reveals Mary as the secret joy within the Church. “In her,” says a hymn, “rejoices all creation.” (Celebration of Faith, Vol 3, pg 89)

Our recent conversations regarding the Theotokos sent me reading and reflecting about this mystery in the Church’s life. Not surprisingly, Schmemmann’s reflections went to the heart of the matter. One of the points in his small book was that Orthodox Christianity has traditionally said very little about Mary. Unlike the Catholic West, there are no traditional treatises on “Mariology.” She is not the subject of theological reflection. Instead, her presence in the life of the Church is found spread throughout our liturgical life – a constantly repeated refrain within the greater chorus of our worship. She is the “secret joy” within the Church.

When I read that phrase in Schmemmann’s work, my heart leaped. And it is just that leaping that I find so hard to express when speaking with others, particularly those who are not Orthodox. At the same time, it is just that leaping that I find utterly intrinsic to the whole of my Orthodox experience. The first time I sensed this, interestingly, was not in a reference to Mary at all.

In college, my best friend approached me in the library and handed me Vladimir Lossky’s *Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*. “Here, Steve,” he said. “Read

this.” Lossky’s work was the most dense piece of theology I had ever attempted. I’m sure that I did not understand the larger part of what I read. However, it was my first exposure to the classical patristic teaching, “God became man so that man could become god.” It is a thought that is expressed in a variety of ways. St. Paul boldly said, “For He [God] made Him [Christ] who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Cor. 5:21) There are numerous other expressions that describe this “exchange.” God became what we are that we might become what He is.

This can easily become an abstraction. When I first read it in Lossky, my heart raced. My best friend and I had been having conversations about the topic (in vague and hesitant ways) for some time. In Lossky, everything was confirmed. In truth, my heart probably became “Orthodox” in that moment, though it would be another 23 years or so before I entered the Church. By the same token, I would say that it came as a surprise when, after my arrival in the Church, that heart, once touched by the word of God’s great exchange (“He became what we are that we might become what He is”), was touched in precisely the same manner in the Church’s veneration of Mary. Schmemmann’s “secret joy” describes it to a “T.”

The Theotokos is probably the first and prime example of this great exchange. St. Paul said, “Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it entered into the mind of man, the good things God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Cor. 2:9). The young virgin correctly (and by inspiration of the Holy Spirit) said, “All generations will call me blessed!” (Lk 1:48) However, she is only the first example of that which awaits us all. As Christ says:

“Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.” (Matt. 12:49-50)

This is that sweet secret! That it is such an intimate part of Orthodox worship is clear evidence that the Liturgy is heaven on earth. We say out loud on earth what we have seen in heaven – and then – only the smallest part of it.