

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUNDAY OF THE MYRRH-BEARERS, May 19, 2013



- TROPARION OF THE NOBLE JOSEPH, Tone Two:

The Noble Joseph, when he had taken down Thy most pure Body from the tree, wrapped it in fine linen and anointed it with spices and placed it in a new tomb; but Thou didst rise on the third day, O Lord, granting the world great mercy.

- TROPARION OF THE MYRRH-BEARERS, Tone Two:

The angel came to the myrrh-bearing women at the tomb and said:

Myrrh is meet for the dead; but Christ has shown Himself to be a stranger to corruption, so, proclaim: the Lord is risen! Granting the world great mercy.

- KONTAKION OF THE MYRRH-BEARERS, Tone Two:

Thou didst command the myrrh-bearers to rejoice, O Christ. By Thy resurrection, Thou didst stop the lamentation of Eve, O God. Thou didst command Thine apostles to preach: the Savior is risen.

- KONTAKION OF PASCHA, Tone Eight:

Though Thou didst descend into the grave, O Immortal One, yet didst Thou destroy the power of Hades. And didst arise as victor, O Christ God, calling to the myrrh-bearing women: Rejoice; and giving peace unto Thine apostles, O Thou who dost grant resurrection to the fallen.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, May 18: 5 PM, VIGIL for the Resurrection
- Sunday, May 19: 9 AM, Baptism
10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:45 AM, Church School
Noon, Agape Meal
- Tues., May 21: 9 AM, Divine Liturgy for the Feast of Sts. Constantine and Helen
- Wed., May 22: 6 PM, Vespers
- Thurs., May 12: 1:45 PM, Study of the Epistle to the Hebrews
6 PM, Akathist to St. Seraphim
7 PM, Parish Council Meeting

- SUNDAY OF THE HOLY MYRRH-BEARERS:

The second Sunday after Pascha is called the Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women. It is dedicated to the women who brought myrrh to the tomb of Christ. It is also dedicated to the secret disciples of the

Lord, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, who arranged for and assisted in the Lord's burial. This is clearly commemorated in the Gospel lesson for the day (Mark 15.43-16.8). The Myrrh-Bearing Women we can identify from the Holy Gospels are Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, (a.k.a., Mary of Cleopas, Joanna the wife of Huza, a guardian of Herod Antipas, Salome the mother of the sons of Zebedee, and Sozanna). These people, especially the Women Disciples, were "Apostles to the Apostles," and no less Christians than they.

- OBSTACLES ON THE PATH TO THE GOSPEL:

One has to see the difference between the two types of knowledge: reasonable, outer knowledge, which helps us to perceive the outer relations between objects, and contemplative, inner knowledge [noetic faculty], which helps to see the profound essence of things. For instance, beauty can be perceived intuitively, with the help of inner feelings. Likewise, faith in God is intuitive knowledge... The fact that belief in God can be called "knowledge" is clearly confirmed by the words of the Lord: And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:3). A similar thought can be found in the Prophet Isaiah: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider (Is. 1:3).

But while scientific-positive cognition requires only reasonable preparation of a certain amount of formal development, the intuitive-spiritual cognition is closely connected with the moral state of the person: it requires purity of heart and strict living. If it seems unattainable for us to truly know God, it is only because of our sinfulness; or because of our lack of observation and attentiveness; or because of habits, instilled in us by contemporary worldly culture, to try to make things fit some category understandable to our rational minds; or because our soul is overloaded, littered with a great number of constantly changing impressions and feelings [and intrusive thoughts].

The philosopher Anaxagoras, who set "the contemplation of the stars" as the main goal of his life, could, without any doubt, perceive God better, due to the very conditions of his life, than any modern person, deafened by the noise of machines, or the "cultural man" with his cinematography, automobiles and every possible type of sport. Deafened by the noise and fuss of our surroundings, we note neither in ourselves, nor around us, the quiet movement of true life [in the heart]. We should stop and listen to this inner life, and look attentively at what is happening within us and around us. Then we would learn to see God, Who, according to the words of the Apostle Paul, "be not far from every one of us: For in Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:27-28).

Try to look over your life attentively and in it you will see many circumstances, meetings and discussions, which are usually perceived by as accidental or unimportant, but under more profound analysis reveal, that some unseen but caring Hand, without forcing us, constantly points our life toward the path of goodness, saves and helps us. Try to remember all these events, write them down, develop the ability to observe them, and you will possess great factual material, which will give you the ability to be convinced both in the existence of God and in His Providence by experience. This experimental way is the best and maybe the only means of knowing God, as St. Basil the Great said, who asserted that when we see the influence of Divine Providence in our life and the lives of others, then we begin to know God and to love Him. We should not be convinced of God's existence through logical conclusions.

Knowledge of God is gained only through personal religious experience. The Divine Existence cannot be proved; it must be only inwardly known in the heart [nous]. If this does not happen, then

there exists some obstacle which prevents one from feeling the Divine Existence. The blind person does not see the stars, not because they do not exist, but because his eyes are damaged.

Thus, everything said above can be summarized like this: one cannot compare knowledge and faith, as something objectively trustworthy to something subjectively arbitrary and unreliable. Faith, as a feeling of assuredness, is the necessary element of any knowledge. However, one should differentiate between scientific-positive, materialistic, reasonable knowledge and spiritual-intuitive, contemplative, penetrating into the depth of life, knowledge, which is faith. This is the highest level of knowledge, which originates from spiritual sensitivity and which is inseparable from the exploit of attaining moral perfection. It is faith, alone, that with Divine help leads us closer to God and to understanding the Gospel. —*Archpriest Sergius Chetverikov, reposed just after World War 2*

- SISTERHOOD:

The May calendar indicates that a Sisterhood Meeting will take place on Sunday, May 19. This is incorrect. Sisterhood Meetings take place on the third Sunday of even numbered months.

- WEDDINGS:

Our Parish will host weddings on Sunday, May 25 as well as on June 2. Next week we will welcome Father Steven and Matushka Deborah Belonick from back east, where both Father and Matushka worked at St. Vladimir's Seminary. Their son, Paul, will be getting married to a woman from south of San Francisco. The following week we will welcome the clergy and faithful from Holy Dormition, as well as their Bishop Daniel, who will gather for the wedding of Beth McCleester and Tim Zieminski. At the end of June we will serve the wedding of our own parishioners, Kira van Hall and George Staykow.

- ON CHILDREN (AND PARENTS) IN CHURCH:

1. Parents should have high expectations of their children. They can do it. If you assume bad behavior, you'll probably get it. You'll get bad behavior at times anyway, but don't shoot yourself in the foot.
2. Don't bring food into church. Nursing babies excepted [Mothers are asked not to nurse in the Nave of the Church]. I haven't had a child yet faint from not eating for two hours. The older ones keep the communion fast. If you have a child who for medical reasons needs food every hour to half hour, then by all means feed them. Just don't do it in the temple.
3. If they're getting bored, pick up the younger ones and slowly (and unobtrusively) walk around the periphery of the church or the narthex pointing out the figures in the icons, moving to the next when the novelty of the current one has worn out. Point out the various features in the church and the action.
4. If you attend a larger church, don't stand in the very back. Wouldn't you be bored if all you could see were people's legs or backsides? (This assumes a church with no pews but even then it's better to sit where they can see the "action.")
5. If children fuss beyond whimpering or brief crying, take them out. But don't make going out fun. Settle them down in a way appropriate to age and then bring them right back in. Stress that "it's important for us to be in church right now." You might go out thirty times when you first try this, but it decreases markedly over a short period of time. If you have a church with a narthex (lucky you!) then you can probably hear and participate in the service from there unless your child is too loud. I have

many times stood in the narthex with one or more children, pacing back and forth with a fussy baby and singing responses. If people look at you like you're crazy because you're singing "Glad some light" by yourself, then let them. Your children will see that it is important and that you're not out there on a lark.

6. Go to church. This sounds obvious, but if you limit your time in church to a Liturgy every few weeks or months, your children will forget how to behave from one time to the next. The parents' excuse is usually, "I don't come to church very often because they act out." This is reversing cause and effect. Note: if they're sick, do keep them home. Not only will they get everyone else sick but they're likely to behave worse than usual and you'll be miserable.
7. I have allowed small "church books" (about icons, saints, the church building, the services) in church and allow the child to look at them quietly, sometimes pointing out the parallels between the pictures and what we're actually doing. Once the books become projectiles, they disappear. No returns. I have had no success with anything else because when they have "toys" they play. "Toys" have included 33 knot prayer ropes. They have good imaginations. (And it's a good idea to search little boys' pockets before church.)
8. Each family has to tailor suggestions like these to their own situations. Life with many small children (or one small child) can be difficult in church. No one will get it perfect. There are some days when you will just want to give up, strap everyone in their car seats and head home. I've done this at least twice. There are limits, after all. Perseverance has its rewards though. Do not hesitate to ask for help from other adults (or even teenagers) in church. Most people will be afraid to volunteer their help for fear of being seen as interfering or critical, but will be happy to assist if asked. Sometimes this help may come in the form of having someone keep an eye on some of your children while you take the fussy one out. It is a good idea for children to form relationships with other adults in church so that they will happily go to them if you have to leave. If you have any children you probably remember the day you switched from "Can't those people control their children?" to "Those poor parents. I was in their shoes last week." Spare a kind look and some encouraging words. They're probably feeling like they'll never be welcomed back. Make sure they know that's not the case. Be especially encouraging to families who are visiting an Orthodox church for the first time. They're probably used to nurseries and Sunday school for children during church and are panicked about how their children will behave. Also keep in mind that you don't know the whole story. If you have a family who is really struggling with the behavior of a child, there might be issues you know nothing about. In general, parents do not want their children to misbehave in church or be a distraction to others. Always assume the best and be kind. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." (Mt 19:14).

— *From the Blog, "Praying with my feet, mostly in the Narthex"*