

# THE ORTHODOX MESSENGER

JULY 2020, Vol. 28, Issue 7

## COUNTING THE COST

...we will never make a more important decision in our lives. How we live now, and where we will live in the future—that is to say spend eternity—will depend on how we respond to Christ. “Follow Me,” said Jesus, “because I offer you salvation. Follow Me because I bring you the life-giving message of Truth. Follow Me because I need witnesses in this land where God is being stricken from all formal teachings in schools and public square. There is a strange psychology being promoted in our land, and it’s this: the person who holds and makes and commits to certain religious convictions regarding Christ, and who lives in accordance with the Gospel, is called narrow minded. But the individual who cannot make up his mind, who lives in accordance with the world one day and in accordance with his own philosophy another day is called broad-minded, open-minded. Jesus shattered that sophomoric approach to the Christian Gospel forever when He said, “He who is not with me, is against me.” Glory be to Him Who has come, and has revealed Himself in the multitude of saints; glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen. —Fr. Michael Margitich, from a sermon in 2010



## COMMUNITY

I WOULD LIKE to offer a few words about nurturing and holding fast to our parish community life during this time of covid-19. Our parish life is precious, and like anything else in this world, it lives because it is nurtured and watered. Parish life is intentional, not accidental. It takes years to grow a healthy and vibrant church community, and it can take a few months for it to dry up from lack of attention, and then weeds (disunity, opposition, coldness, forgetfulness, lack of charity) start to grow. Let’s get some perspective on the nature of our unity.

THE CHURCH is a unity of persons who have been joined together by Jesus Christ, through the grace of the Holy Spirit for the worship and enjoyment of the Kingdom of the Father. “Christ Jesus himself [is] the cornerstone, in Whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in Whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (Eph 2:21–22). The Church is called the “family of God in heaven and on earth” (Eph. 3:15) and the “Body of Christ” (Eph. 1:22), with Jesus as the Head. She is also called the “Bride of Christ” since He gave Himself to Her and is intimately known in Her. The Church is a unity of God’s love, and it is holy because of that—and those who come to Her in faith and repentance, taking up their cross and following Christ, are healed. The power of sin and death in our lives is destroyed, because in baptism we participate in Christ’s death and resurrection. We then live “the life of Christ” and are His disciples.

The Church is a community unlike any other on the earth, not joined by common interests, ideas, agendas or

philosophies: a unity from above, not of the earth. The members of the Church, those washed and sanctified by baptism are “...the temple[s] of the living God...” (2 Cor. 6:16). Let that sink in: Temples of God! Christ-bearers.

This unity is a precious gift. So precious that Christ prayed to His Father the night before His crucifixion that we would share in His glory! “...the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world (John 17).

Continually we are called by Christ the Savior, the life of the Theotokos, St. John the Baptist, the Prophets, the Martyrs, the Monastics and the Saintly Bishops to a Kingdom *not of this world*—yes, of course, but most certainly for the salvation of this world. I quoted, at length, the sermon of Fr. Philip LeMaster on the Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, and want to reiterate that:

“...our Savior wants to make us perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect, to make us shine like irons left in a holy fire. He wants us to forgive those who have wronged us; to love our enemies; to care for Him in the needy, miserable, and outcast; to refuse to worship the false gods of power, wealth, and pleasure; and to treat everyone who bears His image and likeness with the same love that we would show to Him.

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John the Baptist is a reminder that we won't be transformed by following business as usual. We need a radical change, a spiritual rebirth, a new dependence on and openness to the power of a God who does not operate according to our preferences and agendas. Instead of coming up with the usual excuses as to why we can't believe and live as Christ taught, it's time to be shaken out of our complacency. It's time to recognize that what has brought us weakness, despair, and sorrow will simply continue to make more of the same. A little bit of convenient religion on the margins of our lives may produce socially respectable people, but not those who ***manifest the heavenly kingdom even as they live in a corrupt world, increasingly godless, violent, and closer and closer to the Coming of the Lord and judgement.***

The Jews of the first century desperately needed a wake-up call, and did they ever get one in St. John the Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptist! We still need his shocking message and witness. His father Zacharias was struck dumb, couldn't speak, as a sign that John would be the *voice of one crying in the wilderness* (Isaiah 40:3) — and our world is a spiritual wilderness calling out for Godly love; Zacharias eventually came to his senses, could speak, ***we can too.*** The Lord wants to replace our spiritual barrenness with an

abundance of new life as a sign of the salvation of the world. Let's take Him at His word and live accordingly—be saints.” (excerpt from a sermon by Fr Philip LeMasters)

The words above about the nature of the Church, and our calling to live the Life of Christ are foundational, in my opinion, for our understanding of Church community. Perhaps during this pandemic we are learning that there are areas of our Church life need to be strengthened and nurtured (notice, I use the word “our”). This is not something that the priest, council, sisterhood, men's group, choir, etc. etc. can do in an administrative way, or by scheduling more activities on Zoom. For simplification, which can be developed later in a sermon, let me list some bullet points, a takeaway for all this “theological” talk. Here are a few ingredient (there are more one might consider) for the nurturing and care of parish life/community during Covid 19:

- Frequent Liturgical Services (additional weekday Divine Liturgies). Critically important is the participation of the faithful as much as possible and in whatever way is possible. Without that the “spiritual weeds” mentioned above start to grow in each of us.
- Serve Divine Liturgies, Akathists or Moliebens outside at the Courtyard. Ask for a Molieben (service of thanksgiving or supplication) for your family to be served in the courtyard.
- Regular and consistent prayer at home, morning, noon and night. Prayers before and after meals. Reading Scripture.
- Frequent confession, either by phone or in person.
- Phone calls to one another.
- Prayer for each other Have a list of names, and pray for those people.
- Participation in Scripture study. Yes, it's Zoom, and that can be tedious. But, I would hope that more than four people (the usual attendance) would be interested in learning about the Scriptures.
- Work at the church: gardening, cleaning the churches, tending a couple of rows in the vineyard (why not try to make some wine this year??). Ask what is needed.
- Volunteering at the Wednesday afternoon Food Bank
- Agape Meals are, for many of us, an extension of the Liturgy in to the Hall, and therefore an essential part of parish life. These meals are about a loving fellowship with one another. We do not want to lose that. During this pandemic we don't have the meals, and so need to be creative to find other ways to have fellowship.

✓Perhaps the *Men's Group/Women's Book Discussion group/Youth* would like to meet around the fire pit some evenings.

Social distancing with masks is not a problem in that location.

- ✓After the Divine Liturgy perhaps we have coffee together, while maintaining safe practices during this virus spike.
- ✓Bring a lunch to the hall porch and let me know you're coming, and I'll bring a lunch and join you.

There are certainly many more activities and ideas that could be listed, and I hope you will call me with your ideas. During the next two months I will be focusing on some of these things, including those that you will suggest to me, with the aim of nurturing and maintaining, by the grace of God, our community life. —Fr. Lawrence

## EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### CHURCH ATTENDANCE — UPDATE

**W**E ARE NOT yet open for attendance at the Sunday morning Divine Liturgy. Due to the recent infection spike the Parish Council would like to wait a few more weeks until we open. A Sunday Liturgy Sign-Up will be instituted at that time to accommodate the limited number who might attend.

PLEASE NOTE: Since attendance at daily services is usually low, we will allow a small number (up to 25) of attendees inside the Cathedral for the weekday Vespers and Liturgy—with so few people there is no problem with social distancing, provided we all follow the various expectations, including the required wearing of masks while at the Church. —Your Parish Council Members

- THE REDWOOD EMPIRE FOOD BANK is held on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month—July 8 and 22. Volunteers: please arrive around 4 PM to help set up. This Food Bank is an important way in which our parish does outreach to the community. Come and participate.
- BEST WISHES and God's blessing on Alla Keyes, who celebrated her 90th birthday on June 25! Alla was the first pastor's secretary that our parish had, and created a functioning church office and all that implies. Alla is also our only member with a connection to the early days of the parish. Growing up, her family did not attend church anywhere, however since her father was a Russian emigre (had a large chicken farm in Petaluma) and had Russian friends in Santa Rosa, she did come to a wedding in the Protection Church in the late 1930s. Pre-Covid, we had plans to celebrate her birthday on the Hall porch, and sadly had to cancel. Happy Birthday, dear Alla.
- WE WELCOMED Randy Pelfrey as a catechumen on Pentecost, and last week received Daniel Durrant, a long-time friend of Elisabeta, as a catechumen. May the Lord enlighten their way. Please pray for all of the catechumens, including the "veterans" Sonya Elm, and Anthony and Gioia Merrill and their children Phoebe and Collette.
- THE STUDY of the Epistle to the Romans takes place, via Zoom, on the next few Wednesday evenings at 7 PM. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/91396360506?pwd=WDJlQ0ds-OXVNVElZklyb1V3VVIYdz09> the Meeting ID is: 913 9636 0506 and the Password: 180369
- THE SAINT EUGENE'S SUMMER CAMP was cancelled this year, however, there will be on-line activities with your favorite counselors and clergy each morning and evening. Morning Prayers will take place at 8 AM each day, July 6–10; Father Basil Rhodes will offer Bible questions in the morning, and there will be an opportunity to answer in the evening; Fr. Stephan Meholick will lead us in campfire songs on Friday, July 10 at 7 PM. Visit out the following website for more info: [www.steugenecamp.org/virtual-camp](http://www.steugenecamp.org/virtual-camp)



# PRAY AND FAST FOR RECONCILIATION AND AN END TO CIVIL STRIFE

*The following comes from Archbishop Michael of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey, OCA*

THE CLERGY and faithful of the Diocese continue to mourn the tragic losses of life, the needless acts of violence, the divisions among races, and the civil strife which plague many of our cities and countrysides. Our Lord's own words instruct us as to what our response to injustice, inequality, violence and hopelessness must be: "Whatever you do to the least of My brethren, you do it to Me" (Matthew 25:40), and "by this will all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:15).

The Saints remind us that we are blind unless we see every human being—regardless of their differences—as made in the image, and after the likeness, of God (Genesis 1:26-27). And the Sermon on the Mount challenges us to become "peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God."



Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King put it this way, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate; violence multiplies violence in a descending spiral of destruction."

The work of establishing justice and equality, and peace and love among all peoples in our country, cannot be achieved by one-time efforts; it must be an ongoing process of change, of repentance. And some kinds of evil, according to our Savior, are only driven out "by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:21).

So, I invite all of our ...family to join with me in a ***Year Dedicated to Reconciliation and an End to Civil Strife*** by praying and fasting on the first day of every month, beginning Wednesday, July 1, by praying the [\*Akathist to the African Saints\*](#), and the [\*Prayer for Racial Reconciliation\*](#) at 12 Noon, and abstaining from eating lunch that day.

If you cannot pray and fast at noon on that day, then choose another meal from which to fast, and another time to pray the *Akathist*—or at least offer the *Prayer for Racial Reconciliation*, which is at the conclusion of the service, if that is all that you have time to do.

We ask the Lord to help us become instruments of peace and reconciliation, for those who truly pray and fast for this cause, cannot be at the same time instruments of hatred and violence.

May Our Lord bring an end to the strife that divides the people of this country from one another. May He make us instruments of that process, and may He grant mercy and blessed repose to all those who have been taken from us in acts of hatred and fear. May their memory be eternal!

The link for the Diocese of NY/NJ is [here](#).

# PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

## JULY 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>June 28</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy</li> <li>• 1:30 PM, Vespers for Sts. Peter and Paul</li> </ul>	<b>29</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Divine Liturgy, Sts. Peter and Paul</li> </ul> <i>End of the Apostles Fast</i>	<b>30</b>	<b>July 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 AM, Morning Prayer</li> <li>• Noon, Akathist</li> <li>• 5 PM, Vespers</li> <li>• 7 PM, Online Study of Romans</li> </ul>	<b>2 – St. John of SF</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Divine Liturgy, <i>Feast of St. John of SF</i></li> </ul>	<b>3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 AM, Morning Prayer</li> <li>• 11 AM, <i>Panikhida for Nikolai Zache, Healdsburg Cemetery</i></li> </ul>	<b>4</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy in Protection Church</li> <li>• 3:30 PM, Catechism in Hall and via Zoom</li> <li>• 5 PM, Vespers</li> </ul>
<b>5 – St. Sergius of Radonezh</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy</li> </ul>	<b>6</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 PM, Men's Fellowship</li> </ul>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Divine Liturgy</li> <li>• 4 PM, Food Bank</li> <li>• 5 PM, Vespers</li> <li>• 7 PM, Online Study of Romans</li> </ul>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions</li> </ul>	<b>11</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy in Protection Church</li> <li>• 3:30 PM, Catechism in Hall and via Zoom</li> <li>• 5 PM, Vespers</li> </ul>
<b>12 – St. Paisius of Athos</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy</li> </ul>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 PM, Vespers for St. Vladimir</li> </ul>	<b>15 – St. Vladimir Day</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Divine Liturgy</li> <li>• 5 PM, Vespers</li> <li>• 7 PM, Online Study of Romans</li> </ul>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions</li> </ul>	<b>18</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy in Protection Church</li> <li>• 3:30 PM, Catechism in Hall and via Zoom</li> <li>• 5 PM, <b>VIGIL</b></li> </ul>
<b>19 – St. Seraphim Day</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy</li> <li>• 1:30 PM, Vespers for Prophet Elijah</li> </ul>	<b>20 – Prophet Elijah</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy in Protection Church—<i>will not be live-streamed</i></li> <li>• 7 PM, Men's Fellowship</li> </ul>	<b>21</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 PM, Vespers for St. Mary Magdalene</li> </ul>	<b>22 – St. Mary Magdalene</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Divine Liturgy</li> <li>• 4 PM, Food Bank</li> <li>• 5 PM, Vespers</li> <li>• 7 PM, Online <i>TBA</i></li> </ul>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions</li> </ul>	<b>25 – Dormition of St Anna</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy in Protection Church</li> <li>• 3:30 PM, Catechism in Hall and via Zoom</li> <li>• 5 PM, Vespers</li> </ul>
<b>26 – St. Jacob of Alaska</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy</li> </ul>	<b>27 – St Panteleimon</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 AM, Akathist to St. Panteleimon</li> </ul>	<b>28</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Divine Liturgy, <i>Anniversary of the Consecration of St. Seraphim</i></li> </ul>	<b>29</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 PM, Vespers</li> <li>• 7 PM, Online <i>TBA</i></li> </ul>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions</li> <li>• 5 PM, Matins for the Procession of the Holy Cross</li> </ul>	<b>AUGUST 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy in Protection Church</li> <li>• Noon, Akathist</li> <li>• 3:30 PM, Catechism in Hall and via Zoom</li> <li>• 5 PM, Vespers</li> </ul>

Services other than Saturday morning Liturgy will be streamed on the [St. Seraphim Orthodox Church Facebook](#) page