

Saints Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Christian Church

A Parish of the Diocese of New England of the Orthodox Church in America

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Sunday, November 29, 2020

25th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – Tone 8. Martyr Paramon and 370 Martyrs in Bithynia (250). Martyr Philumenus of Ancyra, and with him Martyrs Valerian and Phædrus (ca. 274). Ven. Acacius of Sinai, who is mentioned in *The Ladder* (6th c.). Ven. Nectarius the Obedient, of the Kiev Caves (Near Caves—12th c.). Hieromartyr Abibus (Avíva), Bishop of Nekresi in Georgia (6th c.).

<https://www.oca.org/saints/lives/2020/11/29>

Notes from Fr. John: The Virtue of Hope

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Glory to Jesus Christ!

A central Christian virtue is the virtue of hope. We are called to be hopeful people, placing our hope in all that God has accomplished for us, through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. We live in hope that one day—the great day when Jesus Christ comes in the fullness of His Power and Glory—every wound will be healed, every tear will be dried, every need will be fulfilled, and that all will be well. This is the hope by which and in which Christian people are called to live, each and every day.

It is of course true that life can be extremely difficult and terribly trying. And, the external challenges being what they are, we make life more difficult and more trying by giving in to our sinful desires. Instead of seeing our desire for and attraction to sinful things as an opportunity to choose differently (for though tempted, we are not required to give in to temptation!), we give in to those sinful desires, or, even, give up in the face of those sinful desires. No matter how difficult life is we can make life better when we chose to shun sin and, instead, to live in function of our hope in Jesus Christ.

How do we build hope?

First of all, by binding ourselves to the commitment that we will never give up, that we will never give in. We will always fight on, in hope. When we sin, no matter how seriously, we will remember that Jesus Christ came into the world to save us from our sins. He loves us. He offers us forgiveness. He offers us hope. He promises never to abandon us. We must never have the idea that we can sin beyond the ability of God to forgive. God is all-powerful, and we must not think that we can overcome His power with our paltry “ability” to sin. The only sin that God will not forgive is our decision not to accept His power over sin. If we refuse to be forgiven, God will respect that freely chosen refusal—tragic as it is. So, let us turn to God. Let us ask forgiveness. Let us be forgiven, and live on in the hope that is built up within us when we confess, knowing that we will be forgiven.

Second, we build hope by allowing ourselves to be exposed to that which is full of hope. Let us go to our prayer corners and read the prayers of the Church, for they are full of hope. Let us gaze at the faces of the saints in the holy icons, for they are full of hope. Let us read the words of the Bible, for they are full of hope. Let us reach out to the strong Christians in our lives, for they are full of hope. Let us look at the faces of beautiful and innocent children, for they are full hope. Hope is everywhere, if only we would choose to see it, to encounter it, to grasp it!

Finally, we build hope by letting go of the idea that we can or should trust in ourselves. We are not God. Only God is God. We are God's beloved creatures, made in the image of God in order to grow in the likeness of God. But, it must be said that this growth is accomplished, ultimately, by the grace of God. Spiritual growth is work that God does within us. In Galatians, Chapter 4, Verse 9, Saint Paul reminds the Galatians that we know God, because He first knows us. The initiative and power are with God. All our effort, all our work, is directed at opening ourselves up to the grace of God. We work, but He accomplishes. Salvation is accomplished by God, for us, and we work to receive that which He has accomplished. And, since salvation is accomplished by God—who can accomplish all things—that divine accomplishment is worthy of being the object of our hope. For, to hope in the things of God is to hope in that which is trustworthy. We cannot hope in ourselves, because we will fail ourselves. But, we can place our hope and trust in God, because He is worthy of that hope. Let us be hopeful!

With love in Christ,

Fr. John H.

PARISH PRAYER LIST

We pray for all victims of disease, disaster, difficulty, and senseless violence throughout the world, especially in this time of pestilence and civil unrest.

+ THOSE WHO HAVE DEPARTED THIS LIFE: *Memory Eternal!*

First of all, we pray for all the thousands of victims of COVID-19. Memory Eternal!

Newly Departed

Patriarch IRINEJ of Serbia—head of the Serbian Orthodox Church	d. 11/20/2020
His Beatitude, Metropolitan THEODOSIUS (<i>retired</i>)	d. 10/19/2020
His Eminence, Archbishop David of Alaska	d. 11/27/2020
Madeline "Maddie" Bell—Terryville H.S. student, tragically killed	d. 11/13/2020
Robert (Bob)—Patty N.'s brother	d. 10/21/2020

Anniversaries of Repose – Memory Eternal!

Olga Wrettick	11/29/1966
Stephen Kablesch	11/29/1992
Procopy Chervoniak	11/30/1956
(Matushka) Olga Kiryluk	12/1/2003
Mary Kostyk	12/2/1984
Dan Vasiliu	12/2/2010
Eleanor Plasko	12/3/1966
Tito Zadvomny	12/3/1962
Mary Waite	12/3/2009
Joseph Kiehart	12/3/2015
Katherine "Kay" Rewak Kopcha	12/3/2016
Gabriel Hasko	12/4/1963

THOSE IN NEED OF GOD'S MERCY AND HELP

First of all, we pray for all those suffering due to the present pestilence which is COVID-19, and those working to alleviate their suffering.

Persons captive and suffering for the Faith

Metropolitan Paul and Archbishop John—hostages in Syria

Those who are sick and suffering

Archpriest Michael—former pastor of our parish; reoccurrence of illness
 Archpriest John—Fr. John H.'s uncle through marriage; cancer
 Fyodor (Frank) G.—suffering from Multiple Sclerosis (MS)
 Dolores T.—permanent colon malfunction following colon cancer treatment
 child Drew—grandson of friends of the Nimcheks; ongoing treatment for eye cancer
 Darlyne—facing health challenges; daughter of Bob and Vera Martin
 Donna—Ann S.'s niece, Deb W.'s cousin; kidney disease
 Dayrl—Ann S.'s niece, Deb W.'s cousin; kidney disease
 JoAnn—acquaintance of Jeanne Moore; ovarian cancer
 MaryEllen—Louine K.'s daughter-in-law; suffering with Huntington's Disease
 Maria O.—dialysis three times a week; recent minor surgery
 Yelena "Lenna" M.—overcoming, by God's grace, serious health challenges

Katie and Aubrey—a mother and daughter for whom we have been asked to pray
 Tanya B.—suffering long-term and lingering effects of brain hemorrhage
 Mark—a profound diabetic for whom we have been asked to pray
 Richard—a person for whom we have been asked to pray
 Walter—an elderly man injured in a fall, for whom we have been asked to pray
 Mary Lynn—friend of Donna O.; battling breast cancer
 Mary—relative of Mike L.; requesting prayers for health
 Simone—relative of Mike L.; requesting prayers for health
 Barbara—friend of Patty N.; unwell and in need of prayerful support
 James B.—husband of a Waterbury parishioner; chronically unwell
 Dorothy F.—Waterbury parishioner; still recovering from a serious surgery
 Vincent—relapse of cancer; relative through marriage of P. Oraschewsky
 Rosie D.—ongoing health issues
 Michael "Mike" L.—ongoing health issues
 child George—9-year-old son of a Kenyan Orthodox priest; quite unwell
 Bill M.—has experienced some health issues lately, please keep in prayer
 Christopher—friend of Kathy Mihailoff; struggling with cancer
 Paula—friend of Jim Liverman; struggling with cancer
 Dimitri—brother of Carolyn P.; health issues
 child Hattie—injured in freak accident; request of a family in our parish
 Maryna B.—dealing with some health issues
 Reader Joseph—recent issue with a painful hip joint
 Thomas—Patty N.'s nephew; battling cancer
 Judy—a woman suffering with dementia for whom we have been asked to pray
 Wayne—Donna O.'s father

Shut-ins and those resident in long-term Care Facilities

Alex—John D.'s brother, suffering permanent effects of stroke
 Dolores—Bob M.'s mother, resident in long-term eldercare
 Anna—Rdr. John Paul Sz.'s mother; resident in long-term care
 Maryellen—an acquaintance of Carolyn P.; resident in long-term care

Expectant Mothers

Shelby (Sophia) G. and the child to be born of her

Travelers, Those Soon to be Traveling, and Those Apart from Us

All those who are traveling, soon to be traveling, or apart from us

Those from among us serving on active duty in the Armed Forces

Joel O.—U.S. Navy; hospital corpsman ("medic")
 Joseph B.—a Terryville neighbor; U.S. Marine Corps
 Joshua P.—husband of a niece of Fr. John's; U.S. Army pilot, preparing for deployment
 Alexander—relative of Carolyn P.; 82nd Airborne Division soldier now home from abroad
 Derek—relative of Carolyn P.; serving in Afghanistan in the U.S. Army
 Ian H.—Fr. David K.'s son-in-law; preparing for overseas deployment, U.S. Army

Anniversaries of Marriage

NONE THIS WEEK

Birthdays

NONE THIS WEEK

News and Notes

The Nativity Fast – Ongoing: The Nativity Fast, sometimes called Advent, began on Sunday, November 15. This fast lasts for the 40 days until the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord (Christmas) on December 25. This is a time of fasting and prayer in preparation for the Feast of Christmas. Right now, of course, we are living through a public health crisis, which impacts our ability to have as full an expression of parish life as we might prefer. However, this does not mean that we cannot or should not keep the Nativity Fast. We should, certainly, be doing everything that we can to mark and keep the fast, and to prepare ourselves, accordingly, for the celebration of Christmas, the Saving Birth of Our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ.

Wednesday Morning Matins Services, via “Zoom”: Due to the increase in cases of COVID-19 here in our area, we have made the choice to limit in-person activities at the Church. **This means that, for now, we are suspending our in-person Wednesday morning Matins services.** We have replaced that in-person service with an on-line gathering for worship and prayer. Watch your email inbox for details.

Bible Study – Via “Zoom,” Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m.: We have been holding weekly Bible Study sessions, via video teleconference (“Zoom”) on Tuesday evenings from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. This Tuesday, we will be continuing our reading and discussion of the Letter to the Galatians.

Bible Study Companion Book: If you are interested in reading a book that will serve as a companion to the efforts we are presently making in Bible Study, this book may be a resource for you: *Words of Fire: The Early Epistles of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians and the Galatians*. This book is written by Fr. Lawrence Farley, who is a priest in British Columbia, Canada, in a parish of the Orthodox Church in America’s Archdiocese of Canada. It is published by Conciliar Press, Chesterton, Indiana (<https://store.ancientfaith.com/biblical-studies/>). Fr. Farley writes in his introduction to this book, “This commentary was written...for the average layman, for the nonprofessional....” Thus, it is a book that is accessible to us, Orthodox Christians who regularly attend Church, and who would like to know more about the Bible.

Support from the Parish: If you require financial support during this vexing and challenging time, contact Fr. John, personally and confidentially, and he will endeavor to help you get the assistance that you need. For 2020, the Diocese of New England has reduced by 16.7% (one-sixth) the annual Fair Share contributions that it usually expects from our Parish. This reduction has been put into place with the specific intention that this money—the money that the Parish will not be sending to the Diocese, but will be retaining locally—will be used for charitable and relief purposes. **Don’t be shy: If you need help, contact Fr. John. All such contacts will be treated with strict confidentiality and great sensitivity.**

Donations to the Parish: Please, continue to support our parish during this challenging time. Donations to the Parish may be submitted via checks made out to and mailed to Saints Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Church, 34 Fairview Avenue, Terryville, CT 06786-6329. Also, a PayPal Donation “button” (<https://www.terryvilleorthodoxchurch.org/donatenow>) is located on our parish website to make online donations possible. Our parish is registered as a charity with PayPal, so we have slightly lower fees connected to the use of that means of receiving donations. For us, PayPal’s fees are 2.2%, plus \$0.30 per transaction. (So, for example, a donation of \$100.00 given via PayPal will realize us actual income of \$97.50.)

Confession Appointments, during the Nativity Fast (Advent)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ: Glory to Jesus Christ!

It is considered a normal part of our journeys through the fasting seasons of the Church that we would participate in the saving sacrament of Holy Confession. Obviously, this is a difficult and vexing time, as we continue to journey through what we might well call "COVID-time." Nevertheless, I would ask that every parishioner, please, contact me to discuss the matter of participation in the sacraments of the Church. We need to determine what is possible in this regard for every member of the Parish. (Perhaps, we will only be able to meet virtually, in cyberspace, or by phone, but we must be in contact.) This is of vital and increasing importance, not in spite of the present public health crisis, but because of it.

We are all making efforts, even in this difficult time, to have our most important needs met. We are accessing our materials needs, such as for groceries and other items. Many of us are, also, accessing medical and dental care at this time. If we are meeting those important needs, we should, also, be making sure to meet our deepest need—the need for continuing connection to Jesus Christ and His Church. The things of this world will pass away, but the eternal things of God are everlasting, and the sacraments of the Church connect us to eternity.

Please, do be in touch with me. Also, please know that I will be reaching out to you.

With love, and hope, and prayers,

In Christ,

Fr. John H.

Readings from Holy Scripture

Scripture Readings for the 25th Sunday after Pentecost, this year November 29

The Reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Ephesians (Eph. 4:1-6)

Brothers and Sisters: I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.

text

The Reading from the Gospel according to St. Luke (Luke 13:10-17)

At that time Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And there was a woman who had had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and she praised God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the sabbath, said to the people, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the sabbath day." Then the Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?" As Jesus said this, all his adversaries were put to shame; and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.

