

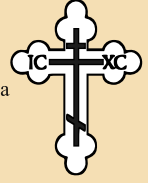


St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church

205 Highland Avenue
Des Peres, MO 63122



A parish of the Diocese of Chicago and Mid-America
Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia



V. Rev. Fr. Martin Swanson, Pastor
Fr. Sergii Alekseev, Associate Pastor
Fr. Radomir Chkautovich, Attached

November 2016

Special Services and Events for November

10/31—San. 6:00 p.m. Vigil for St. John of Kronstadt
11/1—Mon, 8:00 a.m. D. Liturgy for the feast of St. John of Kronstadt
11/5—Sat., 11:00 a.m. Bernard (Philip) Ebrom's Baptism
11/20—Sun. 6:00 p.m. Vigil for Archangel Michael
11/21—Mon 8:00 a.m. D. Liturgy for Archangel Michael
11/25—Fri. 6:00 p.m. Vigil at St. Basil's for St. John Chrysostom
11/26—Sat. 9:00 a.m. Hierarchical D. Liturgy for St. Chrysostom at House Springs
11/28—Mon Beginning of the Nativity Fast

USE eSCRIP

It costs \$0 and benefits the parish. Get Cards at the candle counter.

SERVERS WANTED!

Boys may begin to serve in the altar at St. Basil's from the time they begin to go to Confession (usually about 9 years old). We encourage all our boys to serve in the altar! For more information please contact Michael Orlando.

St. Basil's Parish Facebook Page Address:

www.facebook.com/StBasiltheGreatSTLMO

For daily edification and updates of interest, like our Facebook Fanpage! Parishioner Ron Wall brings the best of Orthodoxy to us there everyday! "Like" us to appear in your FB Newsfeed!

Great Martyr Demetrius (Oct 26/Nov 8)

by St. Nicholai Velimirovich

This glorious and wonderworking saint was born in Thessalonica of noble and devout parents. Implored of God by childless parents, Demetrius was their only son, and so was raised and educated with great care. Demetrius's father was a commander in Thessalonica.

When his father died, Emperor Maximian appointed Demetrius as commander in his place. As he appointed him, Maximian, an opponent of Christ, particularly recommended that he persecute and exterminate the Christians in Thessalonica. Demetrius not only disobeyed the emperor but openly confessed and preached the Lord Jesus Christ in the city of Thessalonica. When the emperor heard of this he became furious with Demetrius. Then, when he was returning from battle against the Sarmatians, Maximian stopped at Thessalonica to investigate the matter.

The emperor summoned Demetrius and questioned him about his faith. Demetrius openly acknowledged his Christian Faith to the emperor and also denounced the emperor's idolatry. Maximian cast Demetrius into prison. Knowing what was awaiting him, Demetrius gave all his goods to his faithful servant Lupus to distribute to the poor, and joyfully awaited his imminent suffering for Christ the Lord.

An angel of God appeared to him in prison, saying: "Peace be to you, O sufferer of Christ; be brave and be strong!" After several days, the emperor sent soldiers to the prison to kill Demetrius. The soldiers found the saint of God at prayer and ran him through with lances. Christians secretly took his body and honorably buried it. Healing myrrh flowed from the body of the martyr of Christ, curing many of the sick. Soon, a small church was built over his relics.

An Illyrian nobleman, Leontius, was afflicted with an incurable illness. He hastened, with prayer to the relics of St. Demetrius and was completely healed. In thanksgiving, Leontius erected a much larger church on the site of the old church. The saint appeared to him on two occasions.

When Emperor Justinian wanted to translate the relics of the saint from Thessalonica to Constantinople, flaming sparks sprang from the tomb and a voice was heard: "Stop, and do not touch!" And thus, the relics of St. Demetrius have remained for all time in Thessalonica.

As the protector of Thessalonica, St. Demetrius has appeared many times, and on many occasions has saved Thessalonica from great calamity. His miracles are without number. The Russians considered St. Demetrius to be the protector of Siberia, which was conquered and annexed to Russia on October 26, 1581.

Miracle One of St. Demetrius of Thessalonica - Demetrius was a commander of Thessalonica during his life and remained so after his repose. People have felt his presence in Thessalonica, especially in times of great calamities. He protects the city, wards off misfortunes, repels invaders, and helps all who invoke his name.

Here is a wonderful example of his unusual aid to people in need. (continued page 2)

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Parish News

Bible Study to be Held on Fridays during the Nativity Fast

As a result of numerous requests Father Martin will conduct a Bible Study during the Nativity Fast. The program of Study will take place in the parish hall on Friday evenings from 7:30 until 9:00 p.m. The Study will begin on December 9th and will run through the end of February. Topics will include: the Bible, and what is Scripture? The books of the Bible, Bible personalities, the Temple and Jewish Feasts and the Geography of the Bible. Jesus Christ, the Apostles, and the early Church.

The program will consist of lecture with plenty of time for questions and light refreshments will be served. This is an introductory course designed to prepare you to read the Bible in the proper context and with better understanding. The course will not include an in-depth study of the Bible or interpretation of verses of Scripture, but you should come prepared to take notes. All parishioners are welcome to attend and to bring guests with them.

Archbishop Peter Will Serve for the Feast of St. John Chrysostom in House Springs

Archbishop Peter will serve a Hierarchical Liturgy for the feast

of St. John Chrysostom at the Church dedicated to the Saints memory located at the Holy Archangels Monastery in House Springs, MO on Saturday November 26th.

Vigil for the Feast will be served at St. Basil's on Friday evening and Divine Liturgy beginning with the greeting of the Archbishop the following morning at 9:00 a.m. in House Springs. All are encouraged to attend.

Parish Prayer List

Please keep the following in your prayers:

Mother Eisodia—health

Catechumen Bernie Ebrom to have surgery in Mid-November just following his Baptism

Symeon Campbell—health

Nadia Danett—health

Ryan and Christine Lundy, Xenia and Alexander—safe relocation

Julia Astafiev's godfather who reposed recently

All those parishioners seeking employment

Errata - Last month's newsletter mentioned that Mark Wiebenga of House Springs is a Reader. This is incorrect.

(continued from page 1) Once, the barbarians attacked Thessalonica and were unable to overtake it. Infuriated at this, they pillaged the countryside and bound and carried off two beautiful maidens whom they gave as a gift to their prince. These maidens knew how to embroider well. When the prince saw their handiwork, he said to them: "I hear that there is a great god in your land, Demetrius, and that he works great miracles. Embroider his face on this linen." The maidens told him that St. Demetrius was not a god but rather God's servant and the helper of Christians. At first, they refused to embroider the face of the saint, but when the prince threatened them with death, they carried out the command and completed the task by St. Demetrius's Day. On the eve of the feast, they looked at their embroidery and wept sorrowfully, as they had to spend the feast day in slavery and had to give that embroidered image of their beloved saint to an impious barbarian. Both maidens prayed to St. Demetrius to forgive them. Then St. Demetrius appeared to them and took them both away, as an angel had once taken the Prophet Habakkuk. He brought them to Thessalonica and set them in his church. A solemn all-night vigil was being celebrated, and many people were there. When they learned of the miraculous rescue of these Christian maidens, all glorified God and St. Demetrius, His great servant and commander.

Miracle Two of St. Demetrius of Thessalonica-

That the saints of God live, clothed in great glory and might in the heavens, Orthodox Christians know, not by their own reasoning, but by the true help and visitations of the saints. At times the saints appear so that men may see and hear them; at times, only to be either seen or heard; at times, though unseen and unheard, they influence our thoughts, our dispositions and our actions.

Among the many miracles of St. Demetrius in Thessalonica the following is recorded: A young man named Onesiphorus was appointed to the service of sacristan in the Church of St. Demetrius of Thessalonica. His primary task was to keep an account of the candles and lampadas. This young man began to steal candles, take them home, and then resell them. St. Demetrius appeared to him and said: "Brother Onesiphorus, your action is not pleasing to me, for you are stealing candles. By this, you bring harm to others and especially to yourself. Cease doing this and repent!" Onesiphorus was frightened and ashamed and, for a time, stopped stealing candles. But he eventually forgot himself, and again began to steal candles. One morning, a distinguished man brought some large candles to the tomb of the saint, lit them, prayed and left. Onesiphorus approached the candles and stretched forth his hand with the intention of taking them, but at that moment a voice like thunder roared: "Are you doing that again?!" As though struck by lightning, Onesiphorus fell to the ground, unconscious. When someone came into the church he found him and lifted him up off the floor; he gradually came to himself and related all that had happened. Everyone was astonished, and glorified God.

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Orthodox Practices

Rules for Prostrations

We have addressed to topic of when to make and when not to make prostrations in Church on previous occasions, but since many people continue to ask the general rules are provided below.

We do not make prostrations at all on Sundays, with the exception being the Kneeling Vespers of Pentecost which usually follow the Divine Liturgy (which is Liturgically Monday), the veneration of the Cross on the third Sunday of Lent, or when the feasts of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross or the Procession of the Cross fall on a Sunday.

We also do not make prostrations on feasts of the Lord (except for the veneration of Cross), regardless of what day they fall on. We do make them on great feasts of the Theotokos, unless they fall on a Sunday.

During Great Lent, we stop making prostrations after the Presanctified Liturgy on Holy Wednesday, with the only exception being the veneration of the Epitaphios (Plashchanitsa) at Holy Friday Vespers, and Holy Saturday Matins. Even though the Epitaphios remains out until just before Paschal Matins (in Russian practice), prostrations are not supposed to be done when venerating it after the Matins of Holy Saturday (which is actually served Friday evening). We do not make prostrations again until the Kneeling Vespers of Pentecost.

Keeping the above in mind, at Liturgies that do not fall on Sundays or Feasts of the Lord, there are five points at which prostrations should be made:

1. At the Anaphora, the priest or bishop says "Let us give thanks unto the Lord."

2. At the end of the hymn: "We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we give thanks unto Thee, O Lord; and we pray unto Thee, O our God." For those in the Altar who are able to hear it, this should be done when the priest or bishop says "Changing them by Thy Holy Spirit." That prayer is traditionally said in a low voice, while the hymn is being sung, and so the people usually do not hear it said.

3. At the end of the hymn to the Theotokos at the Anaphora: "It is truly meet," or its substitute (Zadostoinik).

4. When the chalice is brought out by the deacon or priest, and he says "With the fear of God and with faith, draw nigh." The clergy do not prostrate at this time, because they do this earlier in the Altar, before they commune.

5. When the chalice is shown to the people for the last time, and the priest or bishop says "Always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages." The common practices, however, is that those who have received communion do not make a prostration at this point, and so the clergy likewise do not make a prostration.

It is also a common practice in some local traditions to make a prostration when we sing the "Our Father." However, according to Archbishop Peter, St. John of Shanghai taught that this was incorrect, because, as we say just before we sing this prayer at the Liturgy, we are asking that God would enable us "with boldness and without condemnation to dare to call upon [him] the heavenly God as Father..."

(Adapted from a summary of Archbishop Peter's remarks at the Diocese of Chicago and Mid-America's Fall 2016 Clergy Conference by Fr. John Whiteford)

The Holy Bible in the Orthodox Church: Basics of the Bible for Children and Adults

by parisioner Thomas Nichols

The Holy Bible, which is commonly called Holy Scripture, is very important in the liturgical life of the Orthodox Church and is very important in our spiritual lives as Orthodox Christians. The Bible, at its most basic, is divided into two sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament, broadly speaking, contains the Jewish Law and the writings of the Old Testament Jewish Prophets. As a whole, the Jewish Law and the writings of the Old Testament Prophets show God taking an active role in the lives of the Jewish people. It is from this people that would come our Lord Jesus Christ, whose aim was and is to bring the Jewish people and all people to eternal salvation.

The earthly life of our Lord Jesus Christ is described in the first four books of the New Testament. These books were written by four of Jesus' apostles—Sts. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These four books are collectively called the Gospels. The word Gospel means good news. The Gospels are good news because they tell us about Jesus Christ. In the Bible, after the Gospels, is a book known as the Acts of the Apostles, which was written by the Apostle Luke. In the Acts of the Apostles, St. Luke writes about the life of the early Church following Jesus' Ascension into heaven. After the Acts of the Apostles, there are twenty-one books known as Epistles (letters). These Epistles were written by several of Jesus' apostles—Sts. Paul, James Peter, John, and Jude—and they contain instructions for early Christians and for us today. The final book of the New Testament is called the Apocalypse or (continued page 4)

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Fall Clergy Retreat

The Fall Clergy Retreat

by Parisioner Thomas Nichols

I was fortunate enough to accompany Fr. Martin and Fr. Sergii to Chicago for the Fall Clergy Retreat from October 12th until the 14th. Although I am not a clergyman, Fr. Martin and Fr. Sergii thought that it would be an interesting experience for me to witness the inner workings of the diocese and to meet and speak with some of our diocesan priests and clergymen. The retreat and trip not only exposed me to the goings-on of the diocese, but, perhaps more importantly, gave me insight into the lives and motivations of our diocesan priests, whose vocation it is to bring us to salvation.

The proceedings of the retreat formally began on October 13th at 8:00 a.m. with a discussion, led by Archbishop Peter, of the life of our diocese. Following this, there was a series of administrative discussions until 10:00 a.m. At the conclusion of the administrative discussions, the gathered clergy heard the presentations of several guest speakers. These three presentations pertained to the following: the pastoral issues which priests may experience and how to resolve them, the problems which missionary parishes may face and how to combat them, and the importance of cultivating stewardship in one's parish. The day closed with an all-night Vigil in anticipation of Holy Protection Cathedral's patronal feast day, which was marked the following day (October 14th) by a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, which we attended.

During my time in Chicago, I came to the realization that the retreat itself, although devised for the clergy of diocese, was, at its core, held for the sake of the laity. That is to say that, at every moment of the retreat, the gathered priests and our ruling hierarchy, Archbishop Peter, explicitly and implicitly expressed their concern for the flock whom our Lord Jesus Christ has charged them to keep watch over and to preserve. I saw priests listening intently to our Archbishop and to our guest speakers; I saw priests taking notes; I saw priests asking questions and engaging with the material presented. These are not the actions of men who go about their lives seeking personal gain and who, on occasion, cast an apathetic eye towards their flock whenever it suits them. These actions reveal a fraternity of priests whose deepest concern is for the flock, who daily seek the good of the flock, and who want nothing more in this earthly life than to live out their priestly vocations in service of the flock and in obedience to the Chief Shepherd of the flock, our Lord Jesus Christ. There is a title that the Orthodox Pope of Rome, St. Gregory the Great, took for himself during his episcopacy in the late 6th and early 7th century: *Servus Servorum Dei*, which translates as 'The Servant of the Servants of God'. My experience in Chicago has taught me that our diocesan priests are precisely this. They are the servants of the servants of God, and so they conform themselves to our Risen Lord who became incarnate not to be served but to serve (Mark 10:45).



(continued from page 3) the Revelation of St. John. This book tells us about God's plan for the future.

Every Saturday evening in our church, at Vigil, there are readings from the Bible. Within the Bible, these readings come from the Old Testament and from the New Testament. Every Sunday at the Divine Liturgy there are readings from the New Testament. During the Divine Liturgy, our priests always read to us from the Gospels, which are in the New Testament, and our sub-deacon and readers read to us from either the Acts of the Apostles or from the Epistles. The Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles are in the New Testament, as we said above. Everything that our priests, sub-deacon, and readers read

during our church services is very important. When the Old and New Testaments are read, we ought to listen carefully because the Holy Scriptures tell us about God. In addition to this, we should, whenever possible, read the Bible on our own or with the help of our parents. One of the saints of the Orthodox Church, St. John Chrysostom, tells us that if we do not read the Bible, it makes it more difficult for us to live a Christian life and it makes it more difficult to achieve eternal salvation (St. John Chrysostom, Third Sermon on Lazarus). This makes sense because in order to live a Christian life we must know about Jesus Christ and we must keep His commandments, and much of what we know about Jesus Christ and what he commands us is in the Bible.

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Nativity Fast and Reading the Holy Scriptures

Nativity Fast

By Metropolitan Longin of Saratov

Nativity Fast is a period of preparation for one of the greatest feasts of the Church: the radiant and joyful day of the Nativity of Christ. In his daily life, modern man is fully immersed in his daily earthly activities and cares. The more his soul is burdened with the earthly, the more difficult it becomes for him to perceive the spiritual.

The Church, therefore, has wisely established a time of fasting: a time of penitential introspection, of work on oneself and of conforming oneself to the traditions, foundations, and rules of the Church. One often hears questions of whether fasting is necessary, whether one can forego, mitigate, or shorten it. However, it is characteristic of a true Christian to be completely obedient to the Mother Church, accepting that which she has established and which has been observed by her faithful children for centuries. Today, when the spirit of sacrifice and self-denial is dying out, fasting is the best means of reviving this spirit through restraining the flesh and resisting its insistent demands.

Yet, it goes without saying that bodily fasting alone, such as abstaining from food of animal origin, is insufficient. Spiritual fasting from entertainment and self-amusement, on the other

hand, is essential. In order to understand the fast's essence, its true content, one should spend as much time as possible in church throughout the duration of the fast and be more diligent in fulfilling one's personal rule of prayer. During this time it is especially important to live to the fullest the grace-filled life of the Church by approaching the Mysteries of Confession and Communion more frequently.

A person who fasts is often viewed unsympathetically by his friends and colleagues, and not only unsympathetically, but with rejection and even ridicule. This sometimes gives rise to a cowardly desire to abandon the fast, so as not to appear strange in other people's eyes. It should be firmly understood that our fasting itself can be a wordless sermon for many, reminding them of their forgotten Christian faith and of that great and majestic event for which we are preparing by the means of fasting.

Let us complete the course of this fast with spiritual profit and cleanse ourselves from everything that could hinder Christ from entering and making His abode within us. If we render to the Lord our small labor of abstinence, He will grant us His great and incomparable spiritual joy – the joy of the living knowledge that God has appeared unto us, in order to be with us always, never leaving those who have put their trust in Him, through the joy of Christ's radiant Nativity.

On How to Read Holy Scripture

Hieromonk Seraphim Rose 1934-1982

It is well known that Protestants spend a great deal of time on Holy Scripture, because for them it is everything. For us Orthodox Christians the Scripture also holds an essential place. Often, however, we do not take advantage of it, and do not realize what importance it has for us; or if we do, we often do not approach it in the right spirit because the Protestant approach and Protestant books about the Scriptures are widespread, while our Orthodox approach is quite different.

The fact that Scripture is an essential part of our Faith can be seen in our Orthodox services. There are daily readings from the New Testament from both the Epistles and Gospels. In one year we read through almost the entire New Testament. In the first three days of the week before Pascha—the feast of Christ's Resurrection, the four Gospels are read in church, and on Thursday night of Passion Week twelve long selections from the Gospels are read concerning the Passion of our Lord, with verses sung in between, commenting on these passages. The Old Testament is also used in the services. In the vespers for every great feast three parables are read prefiguring the feast. And the Divine services themselves are filled with

Scriptural quotations, Scriptural allusions and inspiration coming directly from Holy Scripture. Orthodox Christians also read the Scripture outside the services. St. Seraphim, in his monastic life, read the entire New Testament every week. Perhaps it is because we have such a richness of Scripture in our Orthodox tradition that we are often guilty of taking them for granted, of not valuing and making use of the Scriptures.

One of the leading interpreters of Holy Scripture for us is St. John Chrysostom, an early 5th century Holy Father. He wrote commentaries on practically the whole of the New Testament, including all of St. Paul's epistles and also many Old Testament books. In one sermon concerning Scripture, he addresses his flock:

"I exhort you, and I will not cease to exhort you to pay heed not only to what is said here, but when you are home also you should occupy yourselves attentively with the reading of Holy Scripture. Let no one say to me such cold words—worthy of judgment—as these: 'I am occupied with a trial, I have obligations in the city, I have a wife, I have to feed my children, and it is not my duty to read the Scripture but the duty of those who have renounced everything.' What are you saying?! It is not your duty to read Scripture because you are

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Reading the Holy Scriptures

distracted by innumerable cares? On the contrary, it is your duty more than those others, more than the monks; they do not have such need of help as do you who live in the midst of such cares. You need treatment all the more, because you are constantly under such blows and are wounded so often. The reading of Scripture is a great defense against sin. Ignorance of the Scripture is a great misfortune, a great abyss. Not to know anything from the word of God is a disaster. This is what has given rise to heresies, to immorality; it has turned everything upside down.”

Here we see that the reading of Holy Scripture provides us with a great weapon in the fight against the worldly temptations surrounding us—and we do not do enough of it. The Orthodox Church, far from being against the reading of Scripture, greatly encourages it. The Church is only against the misreading of Scripture, against reading one’s own private opinions and passions, even sins into the sacred text. When we hear that the Protestants are all excited about something that they say is in the Scripture—the rapture, for example, or the millennium—we are not against their reading the Scripture but against their misinterpretation of the Scripture. To avoid this pitfall ourselves we must understand what this sacred text is and how we should approach it.

The Bible—the Holy Scripture, the Old and New Testaments—is not an ordinary book. It is one that contains not human but divinely revealed truths. It is the word of God. Therefore, we must approach it with reverence and contrition of heart, not with mere idle curiosity and academic coldness. Nowadays one cannot expect a person who has no sympathy for Christianity, no sympathy for the Scriptures to have a proper attitude of reverence. There is, however, such power in the words of Scripture—especially in the Gospels—that it can convert a person even without this proper attitude. We have heard of cases in communist countries; the police go out in special squads to persecute believers and break up their meetings; they confiscate all their literature: Bibles, hymn books, patristic texts—many written out by hand. They’re supposed to burn them, but sometimes either the person who is assigned to burn them or the person collecting them gets curious and begins reading the condemned materials. And there have been cases where this has changed the person’s life. All of a sudden he meets Jesus Christ. And he’s shocked, especially if he has been raised with the notion that this is a great evil; here he discovers that there is no evil here but rather something quite fantastic.

Many modern scholars approach the Scriptures with a cold, academic spirit; they do not wish to save their souls by reading Scripture: they only want to prove what great scholars they are, what new ideas they can come up with; they want to make a

name for themselves. But we who are Orthodox Christians must have utmost reverence and contrition of heart; i.e., we must approach the word of God with a desire to change our hearts. We read the Scripture in order to gain salvation, not, as some Protestants believe, because we are already saved without the possibility of falling away, but rather as those desperately trying to keep the salvation which Christ has given us, fully aware of our spiritual poverty. For us, reading Scripture is literally a matter of life and death. As King David wrote in the Psalms: Because of Thy words my heart hath been, afraid. I will rejoice in Thy sayings as one that hath found great spoil.

The Scripture contains truth, and nothing else. Therefore, we must study the Scripture believing in its truth, without doubt or criticism. If we have this latter attitude we shall receive no benefit from reading Scripture but only find ourselves with those “wise” men who think they know more than God’s revelation. In fact, the wise of this world often miss the meaning of Scripture. Our Lord prayed: I thank Thee, O Father...that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes (Luke 10:21). In our approach we must not be sophisticated, complicated scholars; we must be simple. And if we are simple the words will have meaning for us.

For our reading of Scripture to be fruitful, to help save our souls, we must ourselves be leading a spiritual life in accordance with the Gospel. The Scriptures are addressed precisely’ to those who are trying to lead a spiritual life. Others will usually read them in vain, and will not even understand much. St. Paul teaches: The natural [i.e., unspiritual] man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (I Cor. 2:14). The more one is leading a spiritual life, the more one is capable of understanding the Scripture.

A second point. Because we are weak and can only boast of our infirmities, we must pray to God to open the eyes of our understanding by His grace. Even Christ’s disciples on the road to Emmaus did not understand the Scripture; they did not understand that it was Christ in front of them interpreting the Scripture, until Christ Himself opened their minds (Luke 24:45). So unless we have our minds opened—which comes from the grace of God—we will read Scripture and not understand it; hearing we will not understand, seeing we will not see....

(excerpted from www.classicalchristianity.com)