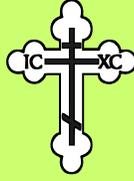




St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church

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
V. Rev. Fr. Radomir Chkautovich, Attached

June 2018

Homily on the Sunday of All Saints

by St. Luke, Archbishop of Crimea

Innumerable and boundless like the sands of the great Sahara and Gobi Deserts are our contemporaries and those who lived before us. Who are they? What are their lives like? What do we see in their souls? If we could see all of what is boundless, we would see that the vast majority of mankind consists of those whom Holy Scripture calls “people of the earth”. Why are they called that? Because the most important goal in their lives and their main striving is for the acquisition of earthly goods—the goods that they receive from material nature.

They are either completely unspiritual, or their spiritual life is not deep! They either have no belief in spiritual world whatsoever, or they pay it scant attention.

These are the people of the earth; these are people who are psychological-emotional, but not spiritual.

These are the main masses of all mankind. But with fear and pain of soul we see on the left flanks of mankind incomparably worse and even terrible people. We see beast-people, monster-people, and even demon-people. And on the right flank of the people of the earth we see the light and glory of the human race, those beatific and God-blessed people, whom the great John the Theologian calls people of God, friends of Christ.

With reverent awe we see the great host of saints, shining in the darkness of this world, like bright divine stars against the dark sky. We see the hosts of prophets and apostles, the great holy hierarchs and pastors, who preached and confirmed the Gospel of Christ.

We see an enormous host of holy martyrs, great monastic saints and desert dwellers, and even people who are similar to

God’s angels.

What made them saints, entirely unlike the people of the earth? We can learn the answer from the apostle Paul’s profound words—words that no one before him could say.

The horror and measureless glory of Christ’s Cross so shook their souls that they forgot the whole world and said, But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world... I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me (Gal. 6:14; 2:20). The great saints could also repeat these sacred words about themselves. Faith in the Lord Jesus and love for Him burned brightly in the hearts of the holy martyrs and gave them the strength to endure horrible sufferings and a terrifying death.

The world lost all of its attraction for the great monastic saints and desert dwellers; the world was crucified to them.

It was unbearable for them to remain among men who were capable of such a measureless crime as the crucifixion on the cross of the Savior of the world, the Son of God; and they left for the uninhabitable deserts and impassible forest wilds so that they could live there in inseparable prayerful communion with God.

Their prayer was deep as the sea, and poured forth ceaselessly, day and night.

Our great Saint Seraphim of Sarov prayed for a thousand days and nights in the forest on a flat rock. St. Arseny the Great stood from evening to morning with uplifted arms in the desert, praying for the whole world. And the prayers of St. Mary of Egypt surpassed in strength even his prayers.
(continued page 2)

Special Services & Events for June

6/4 Mon Apostles Fast begins
6/6 Wed. 3:00 p.m. Fr. Martin’s office hours, Hall
6/6 Wed. 6:00 p.m. Vigil for the 3rd finding of the Head of St. John the Baptist
6/7 Thurs. 8:00 a.m. D. Liturgy for the 3rd finding of the Head of St. John the Baptist
6/11 Mon. 6:00 p.m. Moleben to New Confessor St. Luke, Archbishop

of Simferopol
6/16 Sat. 5:00 p.m. Reader’s Service
6/20 Wed. 3:00 p.m. Fr. Martin’s Office Hours, Hall
6/20 Wed. 6:30 p.m. Choir Practice, Hall
6/27 Wed. 3:00 p.m. Fr. Martin’s Office Hours, Hall
6/27 Wed. 6:30 p.m. Choir Practice, Hall
6/29 Fri. 6:00 p.m. Vigil for St. John of San Francisco and Shanghai
6/30 Sat. 9:00 a.m. D. Liturgy for St. John of San Francisco and Shanghai

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Parish News

PLEASE NOTE!

It is proper that you remain quiet and refrain from moving about the church from the time following the Gospel until Holy Communion. This is a time of great solemnity when people are trying to concentrate on the most sacred part of the Divine Liturgy. Moving about even to attend to the candle stands can be quite distracting during this time. (If the candle require attention during this time please leave them to the people appointed to such work)

Parish Prayer List

Reader Gennady Barabtarlo (Health)

Boris Artemov (Health)

Julia Sakharova's father (Health)

Keep our parishioners, and those who ask us to pray for them in your prayers this month. Contact Fr. Martin to have yourself or your loved ones added to the parish prayer list. Let one of the Fathers know if you, a member of your family, or a friend is ill or hospitalized so that appropriate prayers and visits can be arranged. Please note: Hospitals don't notify clergy of patients, even if you list yourself as a parish member.

Contact Your Priest if You are Ill or Hospitalized

Contact Fr. Martin to have yourself or your loved ones added

to the parish prayer list. Let one of the Fathers know if you, a member of your family, or a friend is ill or hospitalized so that appropriate prayers and visits can be arranged. Please note: Hospitals don't notify clergy of patients, even if you list yourself as a parish member.

USE eSCRIP

It costs \$0 and benefits the parish. Get Cards at the candle counter. Sign up for the AMAZON rebate program to have a portion of you Amazon purchase donated by them to the parish. Please find sign up instructions next to the stair case in the hall.

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:

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

(continued from page 1) We could speak for a long time also about other great ascetics, of whom the whole world was unworthy.

On this first Sunday after Pentecost the Holy Church celebrates the memory of all the saints.

Why was this feast established? There are not very many names of saints in the calendar—only about 2000. But it could not be that there are so few saints; there are immeasurably more.

In the seventh chapter of the Revelation of St. John the Theologian we read, I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands... These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7:9, 14).

There was a boundless and numberless multitude of saints shown to St. John the Theologian in this vision, and not just the 2000 saints whose names we read in the calendar.

God has an enormous multitude of saints, for the salvation of whom the Pre-eternal Son of God, the Savior of the world came down to earth and was incarnate of the Most Holy Virgin Mary.

Only an infinitesimal number of saints have been canonized by the Orthodox Church. But the entire vast multitude of other saints are known only to God, about Whom we say that that He alone sees man's heart, the only "Knower of Hearts." The poor and simple people who mean nothing to this world, who are even held in contempt and persecuted by the world and of whom the world is not worthy, are precious in His all-seeing eyes. This first Sunday after Pentecost is dedicated by the Church to the memory of all the saints—those known to the Church by name, and those known only to God.

Great and holy is this day; and it is fitting for us to honor it at least in prayerful hymns, and ask all the saints for their intercession before the God for us, so that we sinners also might stand, if even in the last ranks, with those who were worthy that the Lord God should call them His children; those who were born again, now not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man (Jn. 1:13), but from God Himself and the immeasurable power of Christ's Gospel.

May this be for all of us! Amen.

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Ruminations from Diaconate Bootcamp

An 'Exorcise' in Diakonia:

By Deacon Ephraim

"Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." (St. Stephen the Archdeacon addressing the Sanhedrin, Acts of the Holy Apostles 7:52-53)

Within this double-edged admonishment of the Jewish ruling priests (and withal their entire temporal institution) lay a grand battle-cry. And immediately thereafter the Archdeacon is set upon by the self-righteous rabble and stoned in an unquenchable rage. But not before this disposition of demons is indicted by the Protomartyr's resplendent vision of the Master and his blessed fate sealed, as he looks up with illumined face, disclosing the following:

"Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God."

In the Ancient Patristics Library multi-volume set (accessible at the Hermitage of the Holy Cross) we receive the tradition of this mystagogy from St. Gregory of Nazianzus. Finding much more than the conception developed by biblical scholars that our Lord appears upright in Stephen's vision only to "welcome him to heaven," St. Gregory grounds our amazement with this image by placing it squarely within the heavenly sheepfold of the Church. The Master stands as the Great General over His amassing troops. The mystery at hand in St. Stephen's evangelic vision, then, directs only to the dynamic unity of God's saving work—the labor of which we actively participate in with upright heart in the Divine Liturgy.

The good servant directed by the Master, then, as he intones the petitions of the litanies that so-named liturgical "master of ceremonies" the deacon (diakon = one who serves) raises his bedazzling stole, the orarion or orar (орарь), in order to commandeer the others of the faithful gathered to "lift up our hearts...unto the Lord." Servants so directed, then, artfully serve God through the people, cutting through like butter all the demonic and worldly distractions, from alluring cultural icons to the enchanting dross of political charisma, to the passions imposing their claim at the helm of our every moment. Everyone present in the Divine Liturgy becomes a servant of God in and through communal prayer at the direction of the deacon.

"Most do not know that the first ordination in the Christian Church takes place in the Book of Acts (6), and it is actually of the first seven deacons," said Archpriest and former long-time

protodeacon, Andre Papkov, about this "ministry of the angels" at the outset of the first annual Diaconate Bootcamp of the Liturgical Arts School, which took place at St. Nicholas the Wonderworker Parish in Asheville, North Carolina May 2 – 6. "The apostles didn't want to get bogged down with [the executive logistics] while conducting the business of administering the Word," Father continues. "Also, the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea in 325 was presided over by whom? St. Athanasius, who at the time was a deacon! And so over time, the deacon becomes more vital to the episcopacy, and often even inherited the cathedra. "Although it's hard to imagine today," the very reverend father added, "Bishops sometimes look to deacons for advice."

The five day workshop consisting of several junior clergymen and clergy hopefuls was archpastorally directed by His Grace, Nicolai, Vicar Bishop of Manhattan, who arrived on Day 4 to give instruction on the pontifical service that evening. Otherwise, the all-day sessions were instructed by Fr. Andre, who also directs the Summer School for Liturgical Music at Holy Trinity Seminary in Jordanville, New York, along with Synodal Protodeacon Vadim Gan. Seven deacons, as fate would have it, enrolled in the program. "Seven deacons! It only remains to be seen, then, which one of you will become Nicholas of Antioch!" prodded Fr. Andre to much laughter. Nicholas is the only one of the seven deacons appointed by the twelve not glorified a saint due to heresy.

The workshop marks the first of several courses planned by the Liturgical Arts School, with Iconography among them, and the Diaconal course will run annually. The opening theme of the diaconal art, or diakonia, set the tone for the practical instruction. Students were treated to several cassette tape audio samples from the Papkov archives of both what to do and perhaps what not to do vocally in their service.

The latter was best embodied by the ominous and massive guttural yet suddenly nasal "Messerschmitt swoops" during the Gospel reading by Archdeacon to Patriarch Pimen, Fr. Stefan Gavshev. This only distracts from prayer. Rather, the example of what to do was best exemplified by St. Tikhon's Archdeacon, Fr. Konstantin Rosov, a basso profundo who is best known for his majestic yet subtle step-melody.

The well-known Russian Liturgical Musicologist Ivan Gardner, who listened to Rosov from his youth, writes, "[Fr. Konstantin] did not stray from the established traditions of psalm-singing and intonation. Without the slightest hint of dramatics, he was able to convey (but not impose!) the full power of the meaning of the text, through the use of nothing more than minimal shading, testifying to the fact that he did not invent the sounds, he did not repeat them by rote, but they

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Ruminations from Diaconate Bootcamp

were born of his grasp of the natural power of the text, while at the same time remaining strictly within the bounds of the classic psalm-singing tradition.”

After an introduction to the long history and first-hand account of the rich tradition of Russian protodeacons (Fr. Andre was one for over 30 years before Metropolitan Lavr reluctantly ordained him to the priesthood), who were often quite famous and auditioned by benefactors for high-treby cathedral appointments, Fr. Andre introduced Fr. Konstantine Rosov as “the ‘Babe Ruth’ of the Russian Protodeacons’ Hall of Fame, if there was one.”

Fr. Vadim, also a basso profundo like Fr. Andre, responded, “I’ve gotta write that down!” The two instructors served together for over a decade at the Diocesan Holy Virgin Protection Cathedral in Chicago. Together they demonstrated proper liturgical ecphonestic or cantillation/vocal inflection as well as censing order when two deacons are serving. “My ultimate goal,” Fr. Vadim said, “is always that the celebrating bishop or priest will have no distractions from prayer. What you absolutely don’t want is him telling you what to do on top of everything he has to do. Do not reverse these roles.”

Ultimately, from the theoretical to the practical, the deacon-art relies on a sense of aesthetic beauty which consists in, as Fr. Vadim says, “ruling out anything unnecessary. Be deliberate, aim for coordinated rather than mechanical pacing, none of

which is primarily concerned with showmanship.”

The deacons were each asked to demonstrate their reading and censing, and constructive criticism was given and encouraged. Many improved immediately; others have specific things to work on. The purpose of the workshop is to provide a setting outside of the services where it less a trial-by-fire. The importance was also highlighted of always being in sync with the choir, communicating proactively with both your primary celebrant and the choir director, and always already being in your starting spot before the next part of the service. Developing a good ‘altar instinct’ cannot be overemphasized, especially given the primary liturgical role of the deacon.

Of this, Fr. Andre told students, “It’s like if, say, you were fighting in Vietnam and you were under a commissioned officer rather than a non-commissioned officer who knows each task first hand. Or, say, if you don’t have a good general, your life expectancy has become maybe six weeks!”

Responding to a student’s pre-submitted written question on the appropriateness of powerful, majestic vocal delivery, Vladyka Nicolai said, “Yes, as long as the service works toward salvation.” It suffices to say in summary that you cannot go wrong as long as you direct prayer in the fullness of the Holy Spirit always aware that it is the Great General our Lord Jesus Christ doing the serving.



St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church St. Louis, MO

All Saints of Russia

All Saints of Russia

From The One Thing Needful, Sermons of Archbishop Andrei (Rymarenko)

Brothers and sisters, today (2nd Sunday after Pentecost) the Holy Church opens before us our native heaven—all the Saints who shone in Russia. They shine as bright stars before us. And the first among them is St. Vladimir. He was a gifted military leader, statesman, a man of penetrating mind and strong will. The political situation among the Russian Slavs required just such a man. Many Slavic tribes were living at that time on the shores of the Dnieper River, and all of them had already been influenced by the Christian message—the dawn of a new life was approaching. Only our forefathers remained pagans. But by that time they too had lost faith in the pagan gods and actually had no religion at all. And the thirst for the One, True, Almighty God more and more strongly took possession of their souls. Vladimir himself was experiencing the same thing: his great soul was tired of the lie and, as a bird from its cage, was straining towards Truth, towards Light.

The same was required in the political situation as well; enlightenment and culture were in Christianity. Paganism was dying out and Christianity was becoming the new, all-powerful movement in contemporary culture and life. The acceptance of Christianity became a necessity, something which could not be put off if the Russian nation wanted to keep in step with other nations.

Vladimir began to act: he sent out his messengers to various countries to find out which faith was the best one. When they returned, they testified that the Orthodox religion of the Greeks was the best, the most full, and was truly the Apostolic Church. Vladimir made his decision. But he was too proud to go bowing to the Greeks and ask for baptism and guidance. He decided, as he always did in his life, to use the power of the sword, to conquer Christianity by force. He went to war with the Greeks, defeated them, and required of them two things: one was the Christian faith and baptism, and the second was the hand of the Greek Princess Anne, famous for her beauty and virtuous life. The Greeks, having no choice, agreed to both.

Vladimir was in the height of his glory. He had achieved everything he wanted, everything a man could achieve: the Christian religion, the beautiful Anne, the triumph of victory and with it incalculable riches, the glory of a victor and statesman, and the power of a dictator. Yes, it seemed he had everything.

The preparation for Holy Baptism was still going on, which to

him might have seemed just a religious formality. Strictly speaking, he already had everything and was master of everything. But suddenly something terrible happened — he went blind. At that time there was no medical science. To go blind meant to lose sight for one's entire life. And so, all at once everything was finished, everything came to an abrupt end. He could never again be a military leader, use his sword, lead his army into battle. Without sight not only was he unable to rule his country, but he could not even take care of himself: he had to be led around and fed. By now the forthcoming marriage had no meaning. Vladimir suddenly became completely alone. This loneliness was terrible for him. And only the Greek missionaries did not forget him. On the contrary, they surrounded him now and revealed to him the depths of Christianity, life of the spirit, life of the heart. And with blind eyes he now saw a completely new life, hitherto unknown to him.

And suddenly, as with this blindness, so will come death. Everything will pass away, will die, and his spirit alone will remain, which has grown attached to this earthly existence, to worldly interests; and it will suffer and languish in this new unearthly, already eternal life.

His state advisors were silent, his sword lay useless and rusted, and the spirit within him was in turmoil, in the pangs of birth upon entering a new life — an eternal, spiritual life. So he approached baptism as a humble, helpless man, who had only one hope, one new eternal goal—communion with God. And here, in the baptismal font a miracle happened: he recovered his sight. He saw again the light of God, this wonderful world, the Dnieper River, fields, forests. Everything was as before. But by now he was a different person; he had already experienced a new life. As a blind man he saw a different light: “Glad light of the holy glory of the immortal, heavenly, holy and blessed Father, Jesus Christ” (Beginning of the vesper song to the Son of God). He entered the font as a pagan: proud, lustful, egotistical, pleasure-loving; and he came out as a humble slave of Jesus Christ, as Vladimir the Saint.

At his call the people of Kiev gathered on the shores of the Dnieper to be baptized. Vladimir began to speak: he called his nation to holiness, to godliness. He urged them all to break off at last from paganism, from the pagan way of life, and to start a new way of life, a Christian way, where everything pertaining to God would be kept in honor—an Orthodox way of life. He said that real life was only in Christ, and this temporary life was just a means, a preparation for true, eternal life.

From this moment Russia became holy and began to bear

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All Saints of Russia

fruits of holiness. One after another, Russian saints began appearing, until they filled up this entire heaven of the Saints who shone in Russia, who as bright stars shine before us now and call us to themselves. Here is Prince Boris, who was killed while Matins was being performed in his cell; and Prince Gleb, who also was killed during prayer; and Prince Isyaslav, who before dawn went in his carriage to Lavra to get advice and blessing on his state matters from the startsi of Pechersk” (Startsi; starets (sing.) — monks distinguished by their great piety, long experience of spiritual life, and gift for guiding other souls. Pechersk—monastery located in caves on the shore of the Dnieper River on the outskirts of Kiev). And only then, after standing through the early Liturgy, would he go to his state meeting and make decisions. So Holy Russia grew and became stronger.

Times have now changed, but the Church is unchangeable and

immutable. And in our time, even in a foreign land, we can still draw from her the same Orthodox way of life. Yes, our life is strained, our jobs are intense, our tempo is mad. And maybe we cannot fulfill everything physically, as our forefathers did. But psychologically we can and we should participate in the flow of Church life. Look attentively around: even some non-Orthodox are coming and accepting our faith and its way of life. By this are they not reproaching our lukewarmness?

May this Sunday of the Saints who shone in Russia serve as the beginning of our new life, which will bring us to Eternal Life!

