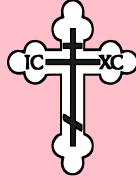


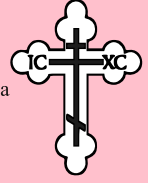


St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church

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

August 2018

On the Transfiguration

by Archbishop Seraphim (Ivanov) +1987

On August 6/19, the Orthodox Church celebrates one of the Great 12 Feast Days—that of the Transfiguration of the Lord on Mount Tabor, which is in what is now the territory of Israel.

Our Lord Jesus Christ transfigured Himself only before His closest disciples: Peter, James and John, 40 days before His crucifixion, which took place on March 30 according to the old calendar. Consequently, the Transfiguration occurred in late February, during what is now Great Lent. That is why the Holy Fathers, in ancient days, moved this feast day to another date. On September 14, we celebrate the Elevation of the Cross of the Lord, when we once again remember the sufferings of Christ the Savior on the Cross.

The Holy Fathers, then, counted back 40 days from that holiday and established August 6 as the Transfiguration of the Lord, a celebration of the transfigured flesh of mankind. The God-Man revealed Himself to his disciples in the way that He was to become after His Resurrection from the dead, and the way the bodies of the righteous will appear after the final, universal resurrection.

We know from the Holy Gospel that the Body of the Risen Lord shone, was able to immediately travel great distances, walk through closed doors, and become instantly invisible. Yet He also possessed the characteristics of our present bodies: the Risen Christ ate earthly food—bread, baked fish and honey, and before all the Apostles, He walked great distances just as we do, with Luke and Cleopus, to Emmaus, blessed and broke bread, etc.

This is all very difficult to perceive for the human mind which lives in a three-dimensional world. But what is impossible for man is possible for God, as Holy Scripture teaches us.

We Christians, even today, are faced with a great challenge—which we face with the aid of the Church Mysteries, of fasting and prayer—and that is to be transfigured here on earth, in our souls and bodies, which really happens to the saints of God, the righteous and simply good Christians.

They bear witness that this holy effort will yield such wondrous spiritual fruits, such joy and satisfaction, that they are incomparable to any joys and consolations on earth, which are so eagerly sought by most of mankind. May the Lord grant all of us the chance to begin the transformation of our souls and bodies, so that we could taste at least a crumb of this joy before even reaching Heaven.

The Lord wishes to help us in this holy matter. He stands at the doorway to our hearts and knocks in order to enter our souls and help transfigure us. This is well described by the renowned poem of Grand Duke Konstantin Konstantinovich:

I knock and wait at the door of your inn,
Open the door and let Me in.
I'm naked, weak, the lowest of low.
My road is hard. Far must I go.
Penniless beggar through the world I roam,
Knock and wait at many a home.
Who'll hear My voice? Who'll take My load,
And bid Me enter his abode?
To such a one I'll come and call him Mine,
Break bread with him and share the wine.
You're weak, exhausted from labors and strain.
With Me your strength you will regain.
With My hand I shall dry your tears of pain
And you will never cry again.
I shall console you, your pain I'll feel,
And share with you your evening meal.
I knock and wait at the door of your inn.
Open the door and let me in.

Special Services & Events for August

8/8 Wed 6:00 p.m. Vigil for St. Panteleimon
8/9 Thur. 8:00 a.m. D. Liturgy for St. Panteleimon
9/14 Tues. Start of the Dormition Fast

9/14 Tues. 6 p.m. Moleben and Blessing of the Water
9/24 Fri. 6:00 Akathist to the Mother of God
9/27 Mon. 6:00 Vigil for the Feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God
9/28 Tues. 8:00 a.m. D. Liturgy for the Feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God

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

Parish News

Please Support Your Parish Fundraiser, September 29, 2018

To raise money for the parish, we will be having a one-day, multi-family yard sale on Saturday, September 29, 2018 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please help us make this event a success. There are a number of ways that you can get involved. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the hall where you can indicate your willingness and availability to help out.

Please note!! We are unable to accept or store items at the church until after the Sunday liturgy/trapeza on September 23.

During the week prior to the sale, we may need some parishioners to help pick-up and/or deliver larger items to the church. We will need help with advertising/signage, accepting delivery of items at the church in the days immediately before the sale, pricing items, setting up tables, selling items, and cleaning up. Please save the date and if possible, please donate a little time to be at the church helping out on the day of the sale. We'll probably need to start setting up at about 6 a.m. to be ready by 8.

At the end of the sale, all leftover items will be donated to Goodwill (or a similar organization). If you have questions about donating items or if you would like to volunteer to help make the fundraiser a success, please contact parishioner Heather Bailey (Marshall) by phone (217-622-0178) or email (heather131@centurylink.net).

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)

Concerning Confession

Although it is preferred that confession be heard on Saturday evenings before or during the Vigil service, appointments for confession can be made at any convenient time. Simply call one of the priests to arrange for your confession. However, confessions are NOT heard, by Fr. Martin during his Office Hours--they can be heard following them at 5:00 p.m. Confessions are also NOT heard (except in emergency or in cases of extreme distance from church) on Sunday morning either before or during the Divine Liturgy. This practice is extremely disruptive to the preparation for the D. Liturgy and to the priest who is preparing himself for the service

Wearing Shorts at Church

During the hot summer months there is a tendency by some to wear shorts to church.. Please be reminded that the wearing of shorts is inappropriate dress for either men or women in church. Parents may dress young toddlers in shorts for church, but otherwise adults and older children should reserve wearing shorts to picnics and the like. We should wear the best that we have when coming to God's house—Church should not be treated as a casual environment.

Parish Prayer List

Reader Gennady—Health
Boris Artemov—Health
Michele Johnstone (Healing of broken foot)
Hieromonk Seraphim—(Recovering from surgery)

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

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

Archbishop Peter's Trip to Russia - 2018

The main purpose of my trip to Russia in July of 2018 was to participate in church services connected with the hundredth anniversary since the brutal killing by the bolsheviks of Czar Nicholas II, his family and their loyal servants.

I had wanted to organize a pilgrimage from our Diocese for the "Royal Days", but was dissuaded because, supposedly, I started too late, and all hotels would be booked for the World Cup. This proved not to be quite right, because the World Cup events in Ekaterinburg ended before the church festivities began. What was correct, thought, was the expensive airfares and heavily booked flights.

I arrived in Moscow on Tuesday, July 10th. As always, I stayed at the Serbian representation/mission to the Moscow Patriarchate, and participated in the patronal feast of the mission - Apostles Peter and Paul - on Thursday, July 12th. I served at the mission again on Sunday, July 15th.

Monday, July 16th, I flew to Ekaterinburg. It was a very clear day and, since I had a window seat, once again I could appreciate the vastness of Russia, her excellent natural system of rivers, the forests stretching for miles and miles, etc.

Ekaterinburg lies a few miles into Asia, in the Ural Mountains, which in reality are rolling hills. I learned something new: I always thought that Siberia begins on the Asian side of the Urals. I was told by the locals it is not so. Siberia begins much more to the East; the boundaries do not coincide. So Ekaterinburg is in Asia, but not in Siberia.

I had a new experience upon my arrival: a black limousine was waiting for me at the bottom of the steps of the airplane. While all the passengers boarded a long-stretched bus, I was met with flowers and whisked through a special VIP terminal. From exiting the airplane to exiting the VIP terminal was less than five minutes. True, I only had carry-on.

All-in-all, the festivities in Ekaterinburg were very well organized. The Vigil was presided by Metropolitan Onuphry of Kiev and All Ukraine, with about 20 bishops co-celebrating. Services were held outside. The sun was relentless, but the locals enjoyed this, because they had snow in the city as late as June 1st.

Divine Liturgy started at mid-night, with Patriarch Kyrill. About 30 bishops participated. ROCOR was represented by Bishop Theodosy of Seattle, Bishop George of Canberra, and myself.

From our Diocese we had deacon Alexander Petrovsky and the

Sander family, both from Cincinnati. There may have been others. Australia and New Zealand were represented by a fairly large group, headed by Archpriest Vladimir Boikov.

It is hard for me to estimate the number of worshippers, but I was told that the crowd was much larger than in previous years. Some estimated its size at 100,000. The majority were visitors. Unfortunately, 70 years of communism left its mark. I am told that only about 20% of the population of Ekaterinburg are believers, the rest are indifferent, with some even being hostile.

After Liturgy the Patriarch led the 20-kilometer procession to Ganina Yama, where the bolsheviks tried to dispose the bodies of the Royal Martyrs. Due to my back problems, I did not go, but returned to the hotel and had a short rest. It felt as Pascha.

At 11:00 a.m. my guide - Fr Anatoly, came to the hotel and we went on a pilgrimage to some of the holy sites of Ekaterinburg. We started by returning the "Church on the Blood", which was built on the spot where the Ipatiev House stood. The house was demolished on the orders of Yeltsin, when he was the local governor.

The church is large, with two levels. Everything, floors and iconostasis, are marble. The lower level has an altar and a chapel next to it which stands on the exact spot of the basement where the Imperial Family was killed. There was a constant flow of pilgrims, bringing flowers and praying. I was told that this goes year-round. Some of the frescoes depict moments from the life of Czar Nicholas: coronation, glorification of St Seraphim of Sarov, etc.

From the "Church on the Blood" we went to the New-Tikhvin Convent. Before the revolution it had 1,000 nuns. It was from here that food was brought daily by the nuns to the Ipatiev House. Whether it reached the Imperial Family no one knows. On July 17, 1918, the nuns were told not to bring food any more.

Part of the convent complex was returned to the church and is slowly being rebuilt. Today there are 100 nuns. We were served a delicious lunch.

From the convent we drove to Ganina Yama, about a 40-minute ride. A monastery was organized after the fall of communism and is slowly growing. Six or 7 churches have been built, all in Russian wooden style. The monks conduct daily services.

We came in the afternoon. The majority of pilgrims had left,

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

Archbishop Peter's Trip to Russia

but, again, there was a constant flow of people. The area is surrounded by a forest of birch and pine trees. The smell was fresh and intoxicating.

Of all the places we visited, this left the biggest impression on me. With many people around, walking, praying, eating, resting, even sleeping, there was an air of serenity, tranquility, graceful and soothing peacefulness. Even a group of Chinese young visitors (probably World Cup fans) were extremely quiet and respectful, almost tip-toeing. The guides spoke in soft voices, no loudspeakers. This place is special.

One thought was constantly on my mind. The Church teaches us that in the afterlife we continue to grow and develop spiritually. We know that Czar Nicholas loved Russia endlessly, and gave his life for his beloved country. This love is only growing within him in Heaven. To whom, if not him, should we beseech to pray before the Throne of God for Russia, when almost the entire world has unjustifiably turned against her. As the late Patriarch Pavle of Serbia warned, politics aside, this is war against Orthodoxy.

Returning to Ekaterinburg we stopped at the "Mid-Ural Convent". It was established about 20 years ago, and now has 500 sisters, 150 of which are full-fledged (mantia-wearing) nuns. They follow a very strict rule of prayer. Besides their regular monastic obediences, they also run an orphanage with a school, have a home for single mothers, and a hospice where they care for terminally ill cancer patients.

From the convent I was driven directly to the airport.

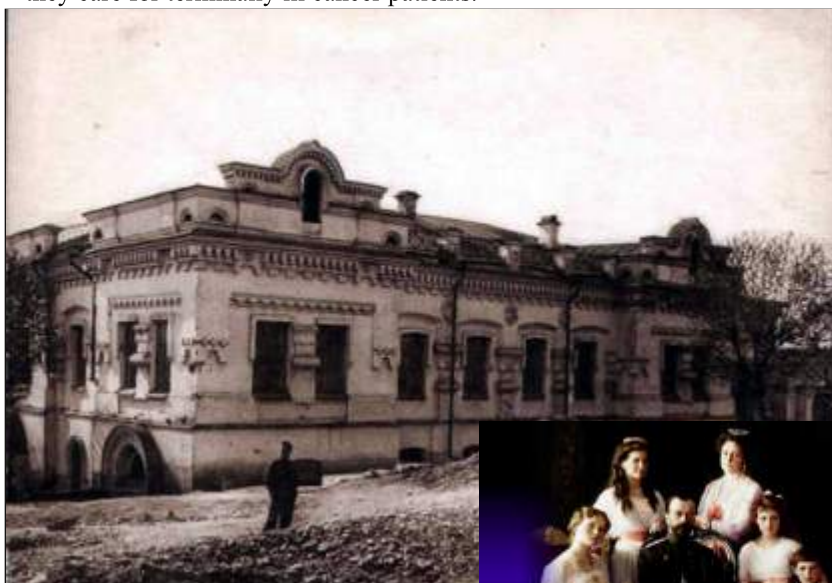
Wednesday morning Bishop Antonije, the Serbian representative in Moscow, and I went to the Holy Trinity-St Sergius Lavra for the feast day of the Saint. Thousands and thousands of pilgrims. The sky was overcast, which made the inside of churches less hot. Bishops presided at Divine Liturgies in every church within the Lavra. The Patriarch served at the Dormition cathedral. About 30 bishops concelebrated with him, myself among them.

On the same day as St Sergius was the feast of the New-Martyr Grand Duchess Elizabeth. Festive services were held in Alapaevsk, where she was killed with her faithful attendant - nun Barbara, and in Jerusalem, where their relics repose.

Today I learned that on July 17th, a festive Divine Liturgy was served at the Russian church in Belgrade by Patriarch Irinej of Serbia. Afterwards a large procession went from the church to the monument of Czar Nicholas, which was erected where the Imperial Embassy once stood, opposite the Old Royal Palace.

Holy New-Martyr Czar Nicholas, together with your Family and all the New-Martyrs, pray to God for us!

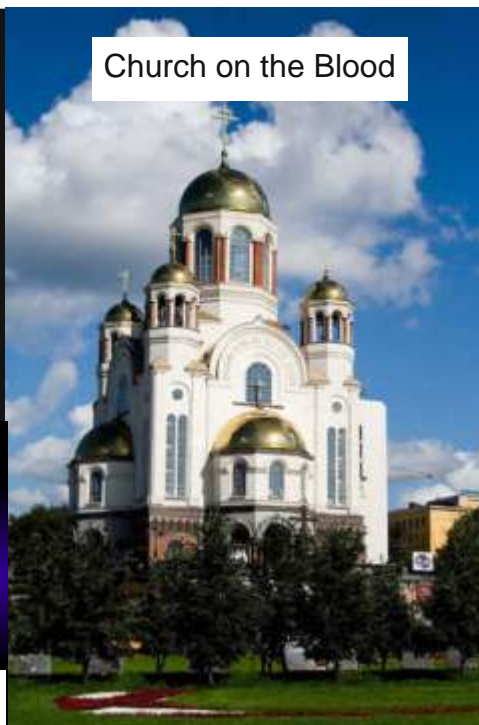
+Archbishop Peter
6/19 July, 2018 - Moscow



Ipatiev House



The Royal Martyred Family



Church on the Blood

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

Preparation of the Lamb for the Divine Liturgy (Part I)

Proskomedia

In our July newsletter we painted with a broad brush the components of the Divine Liturgy prior to its becoming a public worship. Those components are three in number: entrance prayers, vesting of the clergy, and proskomide. It is to the proskomide, as to the crucial component of the three, that we are going to turn our attention in this August newsletter.

Having entered the altar, the deacon prepares items needed for proskomide: the holy chalice, the diskos, the star, liturgical spears, prosporas, wine and water. Once the priest and deacon are vested, they stand before the proskomide table – a smaller version of the Holy Altar Table, located in the northern side of the altar area – and, making three bows from the waist, they say thrice: “God, cleanse us sinners and have mercy on us”. Then the priest says: “By Thy precious Blood” and kisses the chalice, “Thou hast redeemed us from the curse of the law” and kisses the diskos, “Having been nailed to the Cross” and kisses the cross-shaped star, “And pierced with a spear” and kisses the spear, “Thou hast poured forth immortality upon mankind” and kisses the spoon, “O our Saviour, glory to Thee”. Now the service of the proskomide can begin.



The deacon says to the priest: “Bless, master”. Priest: “Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages”. Deacon: “Amen”. The priest makes the sign of the cross with the spear over the

Lamb prospora three times and says thrice, as he is tracing the sign of the cross over it: “In remembrance of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ”. (It must be remembered that, although the Lamb prospora – as well as all other prosporas – are round in shape, the seal with the imprint of the cross is square.) Then, he – with the fear of God – thrusts the spear along the right side of the seal (priest’s left) and cuts a long incision through the prospora from the top almost to the bottom crust. As he makes the cut, the deacon says: “Let us pray to the Lord” (which he says every time the priest makes an incision in the Lamb prospora), while the priest says: “He was led as a sheep to the slaughter” – the words of Prophet Isaiah pointing to the self-abasement of the Son of the God. (The words of the prophet accompany actions of the priest, as he continues to cut the Lamb prospora).

Now he makes the same cut with the spear along the opposite side of the seal and says: “As a blameless lamb before his shearers is silent, so He openeth not his mouth”. When making the incision along the upper border of the square seal, he says:

“In His humility His judgment was taken away”; and cutting along the bottom line of the seal he says: “Who shall declare His generation?” When the Lamb has been cut through along the square seal on all four sides, the deacon commands: “Take, master”, and the priest reverently thrusts the spear horizontally along the bottom crust of the prospora from the right (priest’s left) side of it and, pushing gently up with the spear, removes the Lamb portion of the prospora, saying: “As His life is taken away from the earth”.

Besides the fact that all the above-described actions should be performed with the fear of God, they also need to be executed as precisely as possible, to the priest’s utmost ability. As the result, the Lamb, when taken out of the prospora, ideally should be a cube in shape, while the remainder of the prospora should be preserved intact, symbolizing the Tomb of the Lord: the round loaf with the cube-shaped center part carefully removed.



The priest takes the Lamb, turns it over and places it with the seal down on the diskos. The deacon commands: “Sacrifice, master”, and the priest, saying “Sacrificed is the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sin of the world, for the life and salvation of the world”, makes a vertical cut from the top along the middle of the Lamb and then a horizontal cut from the top, slicing it almost through, but not quite: he stops a few millimeters before reaching the seal (thus the seal remains intact). What he has as the result, when looking down on the inverted Lamb (cube in shape), is a square cut into four square-shaped quarters. The priest carefully turns over the Lamb, so that the seal is on top now and places it in the middle of the diskos. The deacon says: “Pierce, master”, to which the priest responds with the words of the Beloved Apostle: “One of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear and there came forth blood and water. And he who saw it bare witness and his witness is true”, and he pierces the Lamb on its right (priest’s left) side underneath the letters IC on the seal.

The deacon, either having poured wine and a few drops of water in a special vessel and showing it to the priest, or holding a vessel with wine in one hand and a vessel with water in another, says: “Bless, master, the holy union”, and, once they are blessed by the priest, pours them into the holy chalice.

This concludes the preparation of the Lamb for the Divine Liturgy. The proskomide will be further discussed in the September parish newsletter.

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

Fr. Sergii's Visit to a Saint

A Visit to a Saint

On July 3rd through 5th, with the blessing of our ruling hierarch Archbishop Peter and with financial support of a benefactor, the nuns of the Holy Archangels Monastery in House Springs Sergia and Theodosia, accompanied by St Basil's second priest Fr Sergii, made a pilgrimage to the spiritual heart of the American continent – Joy of the All Who Sorrow Cathedral in San Francisco – to venerate the precious relics of Holy Hierarch John, archbishop of Shanghai and San Francisco, the Wonderworker (†1966).

Fr Sergii and nuns Sergia and Theodosia received a warm welcome from the cathedral clergyman Archpriest Sergii Kotar. The pilgrims attended the divine services at the cathedral, the nuns partook of Holy Communion and the Akathist to Holy Hierarch John was served before his relics. The host gave the pilgrims a tour of the cathedral crypt which used to contain the relics of St John before his glorification in 1994 (now the relics of the saint reside under the canopy on the southern side of the cathedral nave).

At the end of the second day of the trip, after conclusion of the Vespers and Matins, the cathedral dean Archpriest Peter Perekrestov asked the men who were present at that time in the cathedral to help transfer the relics of the saint from the middle of the nave – where they were placed for his feast and the following weekend – to its usual place under the canopy. Fr Peter said that St John himself picked us to be at that hour in the cathedral to do this memorable work for him. This was an unforgettable experience.

Then the pilgrims were taken to Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk

"In the Fear of God and with Faith Draw Nigh"

Every Christian needs to be regularly sustained with the Body and Blood of Our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ. No one dare to approach the Holy Mysteries without proper preparation by prayer, fasting and repentance. As we prepare ourselves for the Holy Communion we long to taste of the "food of immortality".

When the Holy Mysteries are brought from the Holy of Holies, the deacon commands the faithful: "In the fear of God and with faith draw nigh". What should be our natural response to this command? We should "draw nigh". "Nigh" is an older version of the word "near". So, we are commanded to come near to the Holy Chalice, not to move as far as possible to the opposite side of the nave (as evident from the photo). The line should start a couple of feet away from the amvon. Perhaps we are waiting for the minor clergy to descend from the choir loft, as they receive the Holy Communion ahead of us. But they do

Church several city blocks away. This route St John would walk almost every day on foot. When asked how long it would take him, Archpriest Sergii said: "About 15 to 20 minutes there and then just as long getting back". St Tikhon's church occupies only a large room in the stately building which used to be a home to St John's orphans and, besides the church and the children's rooms, it was also a home to St John himself – a small room served as his office and monastic cell. Now the building is the headquarters for the Western American Diocese, with the St Tikhon's being a parish church.

Fr Sergii Kotar showed the Missouri pilgrims the humble church and equally humble cell where St John, being the ruling hierarch of Western American Diocese, would conduct the necessary administrative work and where he would rest in a beige armchair. The room is a holy place and a museum: it contains many things the saint used daily. The pilgrims were permitted to sit in St John's chair and pray. So they did – rested for a few minutes and prayed in this unique place sanctified by the labors of our beloved Holy Hierarch John the Wonderworker. Holy Hierarch John, pray to God for us!



not need much room and we do not need to leave them room before the amvon, for, when they approach, we just let them come before us.

Therefore, let us be obedient: when the deacon says "Let us pray to the Lord", we respond with "Lord, have mercy"; when the deacon exclaims "Let us bow our heads unto the Lord", we do as he says; and when his voice resounds through the temple "In the fear of God and with faith draw nigh", we should draw nigh, being filled with longing for the communion with Our Risen Lord.

