

SAINT BASIL THE GREAT ORTHODOX CHURCH

August 2020

St. Basil's Celebrates St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco

Below are pictures from the Divine Liturgy of St. John which took place at St. Basil's on Saturday, July 4th.



205 Highland Avenue
Des Peres, MO 63122

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

Archpriest Martin Swanson, Pastor
Priest Sergii Alekseev, Associate Pastor
Archpriest Radomir Chkautovich, Attached

Weekly Services:

Saturday - Vigil 5:00 p.m.

Sunday - Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Special Services & Events

- Venerable Seraphim of Sarov
Fri. July 31 6 p.m. Vigil
Sat. Aug. 1 9 a.m. Divine Liturgy
- Transfiguration of the Lord
Tue. Aug. 18 6 p.m. Vigil
Wed. Aug. 19 8 a.m. Divine Liturgy
- Procession of the Precious Wood of the Cross
Thurs. Aug. 13 6 p.m. Vespers and Matins
Fri. Aug. 14 8 a.m. Divine Liturgy
- Dormition of the Mother of God
Thurs. Aug. 27 6 p.m. Vigil
Fri. Aug. 28 8 a.m. Divine Liturgy

Parish Prayer List

Archpriest Andrei Papkov – Recovery
 Archpriest Moses Berry – Recovery
 Archimandrite Seraphim – Health
 Nadia Danett – Health
 Catechumen Alaina (Helena) Eaves – Surgery/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 do not notify clergy of patients, even if you list yourself as a parish member.

Gardening Help

Parishioner John Malcolm welcomes any who are willing to help gardening on the church grounds. He will be working at the parish Wednesdays and Saturdays from 9am to noon, weather permitting. Tools, gloves, and water will be provided for all who come to help.

Office Hours

Fr. Martin holds his weekly office hours on Wednesday from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Anyone is welcome to attend.

Choir Practice Resuming

All parishioners are welcome to join the choir. All voices are needed. Choir practice has resumed and will take place weekly on Wednesdays at 6:30 pm and will take place at the church. However, in order to uphold diocesan policy and in keeping with the St. Louis county ordinances issued to restrict Coronavirus spread, the people attending choir practice should practice social distancing.

Use eScrip and Amazon Smile Rebates

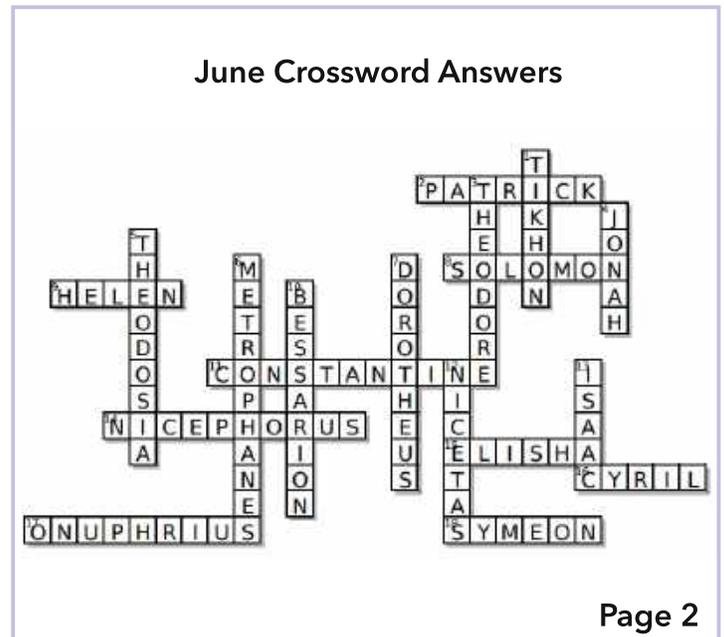
It costs \$0 and benefits the parish. Get cards at the candle counter. Sign up for the Amazon rebate program to have a portion of your Amazon purchase donated by Amazon to the parish. Please find sign up instructions next to the staircase in the hall.

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 nine years old). We encourage all of our boys to serve in the altar! For more information please contact Michael Orlando.

St. Basil's Parish Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/SaintBasiltheGreatSTLMO>
 Check out our Facebook Fanpage for daily edification and interesting updates. Like our page to have us appear in your Facebook Newsfeed.



Are We Going to Enter Eternity as Grumbling Old Men?

Archbishop Agapit of Stuttgart (†2020)

Part I

God the Father, through His love, offers His Son as a sacrifice. Christ through His love to God the Father and to man voluntarily accepts His sufferings on the Cross. And we, to this day, crucify Christ. This is why the Cup for which Christ prayed in Gethsemane to pass Him is so heavy. When the priest places into the Eucharistic Cup the particles taken out for us at proskomedia, God the Son in the Holy Trinity assumes and corrects all of us who were commemorated – all our infirmity – by His Blood.

If we could clearly see in what condition we approach the Holy Altar Table, the Holy Cup, we would shudder. And what about the Lord? “Wash away, O Lord, the sins of those commemorated here by Thy Precious Blood, through the prayers of Thy saints” (the prayer at placing the particles into the Holy Cup of the Blood of the Lord). How much filth is being washed away by the Blood! This is why Jesus was asking for the Cup to pass Him. It is not the fear of death. It is the horror that yesterday, today, tomorrow and unto the ages of ages the Son of God – Who is suffering on the Cross – redeems and receives into the communion with the Holy Trinity all the generations of mankind: all those who will be drinking from this Cup.

To us the communion of the Holy Trinity is revealed through the union of all the children of the Church. We can come to know the Holy Trinity only through experience. Now you are an infant, then an adolescent, then a bridegroom, then a father. Only a father can get a glimpse of what it means when God the Father offers His Son as a sacrifice. It is a growth: this way through different experiences in your life you grow into communal unity of mankind. Only then you can understand another person when you yourself lived through much.

All of us differently go through different situations. When we are infants we relate to our parents in one way, when we are adolescents – in another, when we become bridegrooms or brides – in the third way, when we become fathers or mothers – it is yet another, new level of unity. We must keep all those experiences. Otherwise, how are we going to enter eternity – as grumbling old men? Who are we, if we have nothing of an infant nor a parent?

It is a particular strength of saints that they could retain all the God-given spectrum of communal experiences available to man. Thus, Venerable Seraphim of Sarov was small and meek with children, while he could, as a stern elder, give an admonition to a general. This interpenetration of different experiences is very important when we talk to other people.

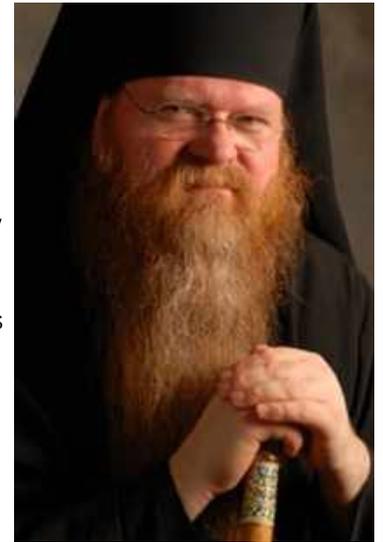
Treasury Report

Parish Treasurer Basil VanRonzelen

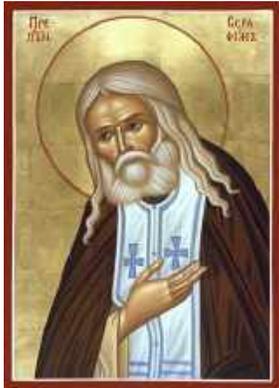
Fellow Parishioners,

We are going to start a new feature of the monthly parish newsletter dedicated to discussing the financial health of the parish and various aspects of finances. Each month we will cover a different subject. As the parish treasurer, I am excited to start this new endeavor because I truly believe in promoting transparency and participation in the financial goings-on of the parish. I believe the more we participate in this aspect of the life of our church, the more we appreciate our parish and the bigger part of all of our lives our parish becomes. For those of you who don't know me, my name is William VanRonzelen, baptized as Basil, but most people call me Bill. I am 31 years old and I was baptized as an adult into Orthodoxy almost two years ago, my wife and I were wed in the church a week or so later, and just this past spring our first child, our son Liam, was baptized as Basil.

Anyway, for the pilot episode of this new feature, I want to start off on a very positive note. As many of you are aware, the Covid-19 pandemic has caused untold hardship and suffering on our nation. One of the effects has been restrictions on large crowds and enforced social distancing, putting churches in a potentially difficult spot financially. I am happy to report that our parish weathered the initial phase of this



pandemic quite well. For the fiscal quarter encompassing the months of March, April, and May, our parish membership rose to the challenge of supporting our church, as we saw a nearly 30% increase in donation revenue from the previous quarter of this year. One of the ways this was accomplished was an increased use of electronic donations through our PayPal account, as well as traditional methods. The number of traceable donors (those who tithe through check or electronically) for the quarter increased by roughly 32%. This means more people were donating than in the previous quarter. This especially is a good development, because regardless of a global pandemic, we do not want to be dependent on a small number of donors to meet our financial obligations. While these developments are encouraging, it is important that we keep this momentum going forward. Unfortunately, it is looking like we might see a resurgence of Covid-19 cases, which might necessitate local authorities reinstating previous occupancy restrictions. Please always feel free to approach me with any questions!



Apparition of the Mother of God to St. Seraphim

Ch. 17 St. Seraphim of Sarov: A Spiritual Biography by Archimandrite Lazarus Moore

One year and nine months before his departure from this world St. Seraphim was favoured by a wonderful visitation of the heavenly Queen. This was Our Lady's twelfth visit to him. It took place early in the morning, on the Feast of the Annunciation, 25th March 1831. It was a kind of premonition of his blessed end and of the incorruptible glory which awaited him. Mother Eupraxia, an elderly Nun of the Diveyevo Convent, wrote of this wonderful event as follows:

"Father told me two days in advance to come to him on that day. When I came, Father announced: 'We shall have a vision of the Mother of God,' and making me bend to the ground, he covered me with his mantle and read over me out of a book. Then, lifting me up, he said: 'Now hold on to me and don't be afraid of anything.'

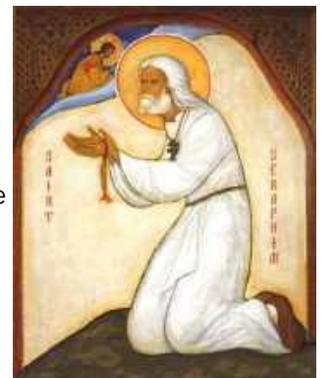
At that moment there was a noise like the noise of a forest in a strong gale. When it subsided, we heard singing which sounded like Church singing. The door of the cell opened of itself, it became light, brighter than day, and the cell was filled with a fragrance like that of rose-scented incense, only better.

Father was kneeling with his hands raised to heaven. I was terrified. Father stood up and said: 'Don't be afraid, child. It is not a misfortune, it is a mercy sent to us by God. Here is our most glorious, most pure Lady, the most holy Mother of God coming to us!'

Two angels were walking in front holding--one in his right hand and the other in his left--branches which were just bursting into blossom. Their hair looked like golden flax and lay on their shoulders. They stood in front. They were followed by St. John the Baptist and St. John [the Theologian]. Their garments were white, shining with purity. After them came the Mother of God who was followed by twelve virgins.

The Queen of Heaven was wearing a mantle similar to the one painted on the Icon of Our Lady of Sorrows. It was glistening, though I cannot say what colour it was; it was of inexpressible beauty, fastened under her neck by a large round buckle or clasp studded with crosses variously adorned. I remember that it shone with an extraordinary brightness. Her dress which was covered by her mantle was green, girded high up by a belt. Over the mantle there was a kind of epitachelion, and on her wrists were cuffs which, like the epitachelion, were covered with crosses. She seemed taller than all the virgins. On her head was a high crown richly adorned with crosses; it was beautiful, wonderful, and shone with such light that my eyes could not look at it; nor could I look at the buckle or clasp, or at the face of the heavily Queen herself. Her hair lay loose on her shoulder and was longer and fairer than that of the angels.

The virgins came after her in pairs. They wore crowns and garments of various colours. They were of different statures, and their faces were also different as well as their hair which lay on their shoulders. All were of great beauty. They stood round us all. The Queen of Heaven was in the middle.



The cell became spacious and its top was filled with flames which seemed like burning candles. It was lighter than at midday, but it was a special light unlike the light of day; it was brighter and whiter than sunlight.

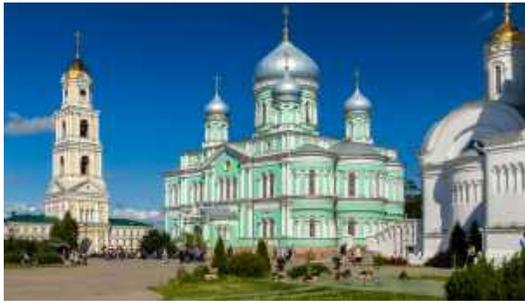
I was terrified and fell down. The Queen of Heaven came up to me and touching me with her right hand, said: 'Stand up, girl, and don't be afraid of us. Just such maidens as you are, have come here with me.' I did not feel how I got up. The Queen of Heaven graciously repeated: 'Don't be afraid. We have come to visit you.'

Father Seraphim was no longer on his knees, but was standing on his feet before the most holy Mother of God, and she was speaking to him as graciously as if he were one of her own family.

Filled with great joy I asked Father Seraphim where we were. I thought I was no longer alive. Then when I asked him: 'Who are these?' the most holy Mother of God told me to go up to the virgins and ask them myself.

They were standing in order on both sides as they had come: first, the Great Martyrs Barbara and Catherine; second, the Protomartyr St. Thekla and the Great Martyr Marina; third, the Great Martyr and Queen St. Irene and Saint Eupraxia; fourth, the Great Martyrs Sts. Pelagia and Dorothea; fifth, Saint Macrina and the Martyr Justina; sixth, the Great Martyr St. Juliana and the Martyr Anicia.

Much of what the most holy Mother of God said to Father Seraphim the sharer of his vision could not hear, but she heard: 'Do not leave my virgins' (the Divevevo Sisters).



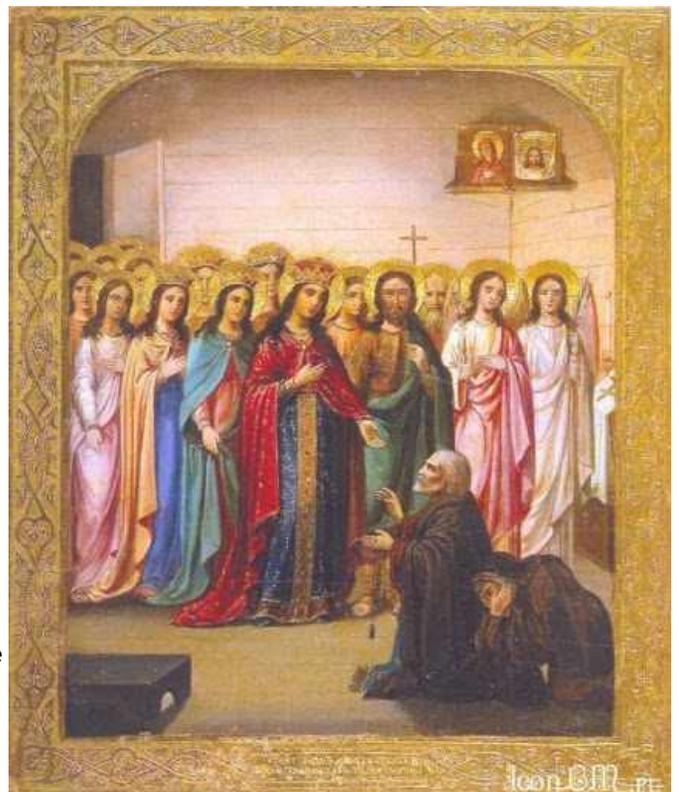
Divevevo Monastery

Father Seraphim replied: 'O Lady! I am gathering them, but I cannot manage them by myself.' To this the Queen of Heaven answered: 'I will help you, my beloved, in everything. Impose upon them obedience. If they do it, they will be with you and near me; but if they lose their wisdom, they will be deprived of the lot of these near virgins of mine. There will be no place or crown of this kind for them. Whoever offends them will be struck by me; whoever serves them for the Lord's sake will be remembered before God.'

Then turning to me, she said: 'Look, at these virgins of mine and their crowns. Some of them left an earthly kingdom and riches, desiring the eternal and heavenly Kingdom. They loved voluntary poverty, they loved the Lord alone, and you see what glory and honour they have been granted. As it was before, so it is now. Only the former martyrs suffered openly and the present ones do so secretly, through heartfelt sorrows, but their reward will be the same.'

The vision ended with the most holy Mother of God saying to Father Seraphim: 'Soon my beloved, you will be with us,' and she blessed him. All the Saints bid him farewell. St. John the Baptist and St. John [the Theologian] blessed him, while the virgins and he kissed one another's hands.

After that, Father turned to me and said: 'You see, Mother, what grace has been granted us sinners by the Lord. This is already the twelfth time that I have had such a vision from God. And now the Lord has granted it to you! We have had something which justifies our faith and hope in the Lord. Conquer the enemy--the devil--and be wise in all your dealings with him. The Lord will help you in everything. Call to your help the Lord and the Mother of God, and the Saints, and remember poor me. Remember and say in your prayer: 'O Lord, how am I to die? How shall I appear before the awful judgement, O Lord? What answer shall I give for my deeds, O Lord? Queen of Heaven, help me!'



Ask Your Priest

Q: I often hear Father mention before communion that we should be reading pre-communion prayers before receiving communion. I want to make sure I am preparing properly, which is why I ask the following: What are these prayers and where can I find them? Furthermore, why should we say them before we commune?

A: *During the Divine Liturgy before the time for the people to receive Holy Communion the deacon exclaims "...With fear of God and with faith draw nigh." Preparation for receiving Holy Communion shouldn't consist of mindlessly following a set of rules. The test is this: as I approach the chalice am I fully aware that the Lord is about to enter me and have I sought to prepare myself—spiritually, morally and physically to receive Him? The Church over the centuries has developed certain practices to help us properly prepare to receive communion. The first is self-examination. St. Paul says "let a man examine himself and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup" (1 Corinthians 11:28). Second, if your conscience shows you that you have done evil or harm to another person seek reconciliation or make restitution, for our Lord said, "so if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift at the altar and go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift." (Matthew 5:23-24). To prepare our minds, hearts, and bodies to be receptive to the Lord in communion we must be reminded of our duty to prepare ourselves to receive the true Body and the true Blood of our Lord. One of the ways that we do this is through prayer which serves to not only remind us of the awesome gifts which we are receiving, but also of our obligation to be properly prepared to receive them. The Church over the centuries has developed a series of beautiful, moving, and soul-searching prayers "Before Holy Communion" which can be found in most Orthodox Prayer Books. You should sincerely recite these prayers before you receive communion. They are often divided with the Canon before communion being read before bed and the remainder of the prayers being recited upon arising. Prayers after communion are found in the same prayer book and should be said in thanksgiving for the gift that God has provided us in the form of the Eucharist.*

Then, when the deacon calls out "With fear of God and with faith draw nigh," you will be able to respond to the call knowing that you have with God's help—prepared yourself to receive the precious Body and Blood of your Lord Jesus Christ.

August Activity

Below are the nine Beatitudes split into two sections. Match the first part of each Beatitude on the left with the correct second half of the phrase on the right.

- | | |
|--|---|
| _____ Blessed are the poor in spirit | A. For they shall see God |
| _____ Blessed are they that mourn | B. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in Heaven |
| _____ Blessed are the meek | C. For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven |
| _____ Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness | D. For they shall be comforted |
| _____ Blessed are the merciful | E. For they shall be filled |
| _____ Blessed are the pure in heart | F. For they shall be called the children of God |
| _____ Blessed are the peacemakers | G. For they shall inherit the earth |
| _____ Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake | H. For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven |
| _____ Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. | I. For they shall obtain mercy |