



SAINT 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

CLERGY

Archpriest Sergii Alekseev, Parish Rector
Archpriest Martin Swanson, Dean
Protopriest Radomir Chkautovich
Deacon Ephraim Galloway
Deacon Thomas Nichols

October 2021

Schedule of Services

- **15th Sunday after Pentecost**
Afterfeast of the Exaltation of the Cross
Sat. Oct. 2 Vigil 5 P.M.
Sun. Oct. 3 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Venerable Sergii of Radonezh**
Thur. Oct. 7 Vigil 6 P.M.
Fri. Oct. 8 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **16th Sunday after Pentecost**
New Hieromartyr Peter of Krutitsy
Sat. Oct. 9 Vigil 5 P.M.
Sun. Oct. 10 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **17th Sunday after Pentecost**
Sat. Oct. 16 Vigil 5 P.M.
Sun. Oct. 17 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Apostle Thomas**
Mon. Oct. 18 Vigil 6 P.M.
Tue. Oct. 19 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **18th Sunday after Pentecost**
Holy Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council
Sat. Oct. 23 Vigil 5 P.M.
Sun. Oct. 24 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Iveron Icon of the Mother of God**
Mon. Oct. 25 Vigil 6 P.M.
Tue. Oct. 26 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **19th Sunday after Pentecost**
Apostle Luke
Sat. Oct. 30 Vigil 5 P.M.
Sun. Oct. 31 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.

We would like to offer to your attention a discussion which appeared in print in *Road to Emmaus magazine eleven years ago. The abridged version of the discussion on the subject of the use of languages in the Church will be published in our newsletter in several installments.*

In the following discussion of the use of traditional languages in contemporary Orthodoxy, Sister S., a European Orthodox nun and experienced Greek-English translator, reflects with the editor of *Road to Emmaus* Orthodox magazine on the deep connection between holy language and an Orthodox worldview.

* * *

Road to Emmaus (RTE): Sister, I'd like to begin with a quote from *Gifts of the Desert* in a discussion between the author, Dr. Kyriakos Markides, and a Cypriot abbot, Father Maximos (now Metropolitan Athanasios of Limassol, Cyprus). [Fr. Maximos begins:] "We must avoid addressing ourselves to God in a superficial casual way. For this reason Elder Sophrony goes so far as to say that the language we use in prayer must be different from the ordinary language of everyday usage. That is why he insisted

The Mystery of Holy Language

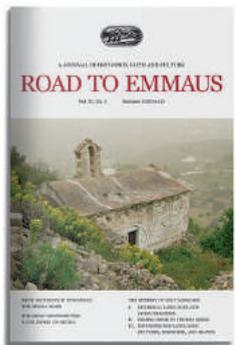
that the language of the liturgy should not be translated into the contemporary spoken vernacular."

"A lot of people today would strongly object to that suggestion," I pointed out. "They demand that church services be conducted in the spoken ordinary language so that they can understand what is being said. Why did Elder Sophrony hold to such a position?"

"Elder Sophrony claimed that when we conduct the liturgy using everyday language, we lower the level of our communication with God."

"How is that so?" I asked.

"He believed that ordinary language carries meanings and images from our daily reality that usually lack the element of holiness and purity. On the other hand, when we address ourselves to God in a language that has, as it were, an exclusive usage within the boundaries of the Church, the very words and sounds of that language evoke sacred feelings and images that



facilitate communication with God. A special language that offers precise and exclusive meanings can automatically be experienced as the language of the Church. It carries greater spiritual force.”

This is an astounding statement at a time when western convert churches are eager to translate everything into contemporary speech. Of course, the desire to hear the services in one’s own language is understandable and necessary, but underestimating the importance of primary church languages such as Greek, Latin, Slavonic, Georgian, Syriac, Arabic, too often ends in ignoring them, or even in a kind of disdain for the living traditions and original languages.

SISTER S.: The person who reads the services and the theological books in the Greek of the Church Fathers gets much more out of it than a straightforward translation in French, German, or English can provide. In Greek, these words and terms have a long cultural history and theological meanings that were hammered out by great saints and theologians. They have a precision, a depth of meaning, and a breadth of context that is

almost impossible to capture in another language. Slavonic comes the closest because the Russians, Serbs and Bulgarians have had centuries of lived Orthodoxy that fills the words with meaning.

These are words that have a history, that have been used by the Church Fathers to mean specific things within a specific Orthodox theological-spiritual context. When you translate them into English, the words have a whole different context. In one language, a word has a certain circle of meaning, while in another, the closest word might have an overlapping circle of meaning, but it will never be exactly the same. It has other echoes and other connotations. (Like the use of “gay” now in English, to use a crude example.) In addition, English theological terms are often shaded by centuries of use in a Roman Catholic or Protestant context. So, translations can never be exact from one language to another because all the words will never have the same exact meaning.

To be continued



The question of vaccination is not an ecclesiastical one - those who wish to be vaccinated may do so, just as those who do not wish to be vaccinated should not be forced to do so. Therefore, we should not attempt to dissuade those who wish to be vaccinated – nor should we attempt to convince those who do not wish to be vaccinated. We may not state that the Church is against vaccination

The Orthodox Church on Vaccination

because this is not true. The Church has always recognized modern medicine as a miracle given to man by God. This is not to say that medicine cannot be used immorally – of course it can. But to state that the Church is against vaccines is simply untrue, and we must – at a minimum – be on the side of truth.

Pictured to the left is Archbishop Peter receiving his COVID-19 vaccination in March of 2021.

Pagan Flavor Has Gone Too Strong

Adapted from musing by Nun Cornelia (Rees)

Golden autumn is here again, with harvests, orange, yellow, and red leaves falling everywhere, apple cider, and so many pumpkins that we don’t know what to do with them. In olden days this would be the colorful background for harvest festivals, Christians would give thanks to the Lord for the abundance of blessing He sends down to sinful mankind.

Unfortunately in America these blessings have a way of getting sidetracked, and we sometimes find the old pagan flavor of our British Isle roots tastier than the Christian ones. A good example of this is Halloween. We are so used to it, it is such a part of our culture that Orthodox Christians with children are faced with a dilemma every time it rolls around. The older generation has nothing but pleasant

memories of dressing up as princesses, mighty mouses, supermen,

and various fairy tale characters to go gathering bags of perfectly sanctioned candy from our neighbors (who in those days we actually knew), bobbing for apples, taking hayrides, and just having fun.

Beginning in the sixties things sometimes went wrong. Living in a city I personally recall reports of needles inserted into apples given to innocent costumed tots, or candy laced with hallucinogenic drugs. Apparently, some people preferred to execute the “trick” rather than the treat, and let their wicked side come out. And there is the problem of witches, goblins, skeletons... With encouragement from Hollywood’s progressively unsparing special effects, children’s costumes have grown ever gorier.

We have become gradually desensitized to these things. But as Orthodox Christians, it would be educational to watch the reaction of other Orthodox Christians from countries that know nothing of Halloween. I remember, for example, observing the horror on the faces of Ethiopian immigrants when encountering what they thought were normal Christians voluntarily dressing themselves and their children as ghouls. And I will never forget the reaction of a group of Orthodox Russians visiting the United States for the first time before the final fall of the Iron Curtain. Leering, sharp-toothed jack-o-lanterns, evilly grinning warty-faced witches on brooms, black cats, large hairy spiders, and skeletons adorning middle class lawns and doorways made their hair stand on end and their hands involuntarily dip into their pockets to search for their return tickets.

Right-believing
Great Prince
Alexander Nevsky

Feasts at St. Basil's



Beheading of St.
John the Forerunner



Holy Hierarch
Joasaph of Belgorod



Exaltation of the Cross



Ask Your Priest

Q: Is it appropriate for me to participate in Halloween festivities as an Orthodox Christian? How should I handle my children's involvement in things such as trick or treating, wearing costumes, and other Halloween parties? Is it appropriate for me to hand out candy to trick-or-treaters?

Fr. Martin: The celebration of Halloween can be traced in the West to the Middle Ages and the celebration of All Saints Day on the first of November. It was also associated with Pagan practices related to the new Harvest and the fruitfulness of the earth. During these times the poor would go to the homes of the rich and ask for beer and bread in order to guard their property from vandalism (trick or treat). In the United States during Pre-Revolutionary times, the holiday was rejected by southern colonists for being associated with Catholicism. After the Revolution, Halloween became quite a commercial success in the United States thus contributing to its popularity.

Because of the emphasis on the Satanic, the Devil and Evil Spirits embodied by the celebration of the feast, as Orthodox Christians it is inappropriate for either ourselves or our families to participate in the festival and a direct violation of our vows made during our Catechesis—when we reject Satan and spit upon him. When we serve God, we reject and oppose all that is demonic, evil and sinful and separates us from God. When we serve God, we accept His Lordship over our lives and a servant of God cannot be a servant of anything demonic and evil

As an appropriate replacement for Halloween, we might plan an All Saints Party for our children and their friends. The children could dress up as their patron saints. We could ask the Pastor to begin the evening with a Vesper service or a Moleben to All Saints. Following, we could have a party, with prizes for the best costumes, candy and traditional games like bobbing for apples.

It is never appropriate for Orthodox Christians to participate in activities which celebrate or glorify evil, however our faith is rich in the good and perfect gifts that we can use to glorify God and to teach our children the joy which God has given us in our faith.

Treasury Report

Parish Treasurer Basil VanRonzelen

I wanted to take the opportunity to quickly speak to you about something that was brought to my attention by one of our fellow parishioners and that I think is a good idea to make the parish aware of. As I am sure you are all aware, our parish incurs many set, regular expenses throughout the year. Some are fixed, while others fluctuate within a bandwidth in a certain cyclicity. However, as sure as night turns to day, we must pay them. Our revenue stream is made up entirely of donations from the parish membership, and is subject to its own cycles of volatility. In addition to our regular expenses, there are, throughout the year, various donations and fundraising drives that put an additional strain on our finances. With this in mind, one thing that

can be done to not only increase our revenue stream but also smooth out volatility would be to have guaranteed, regular donations from those able to commit to that obligation. I will be the first to admit that I regularly forget to bring my checkbook and am also guilty of that millennial trait of not carrying cash around. One way to address these concerns was brought to me a few weeks ago by a fellow parishioner when he asked if regular withdrawals from his bank checking account to the church's checking account could be made. After consulting with our parish's bank (Bank of America) I found that we could not set up any kind of "pull" transaction from our end, however, each individual parishioner was free to set up a "push" movement from their end into

the parish account. I want to say that I am not trying to pressure anyone into anything, I am a firm believer in paying what you can when you can. However, for those able to make the obligation, the help it would bring to our beloved parish cannot be overstated. If anyone is interested in making such an arrangement, please speak with me and I will give the necessary information that you can then take to your banking institution to set up the repeating donation. As always, please never hesitate to approach me with any questions.

St. Basil's Icon Corner

The icon of St. Sergius of

Radonezh pictured below can be found on the southern side of the nave (inner part of the church). St. Sergius was a heiomonk or priest monk and is depicted in his analav which is worn by monks. A fixed to the icon is a relic of the saint which was sent to Fr. Sergii by Holy Trinity-St Sergius Lavra's Igumen Kornilii. Below is an account of the saint's childhood and his struggles and triumph with learning to read. It should be noted that Venerable Sergius bore the name Bartholomew before his monastic tonsure.

At the age of seven, Bartholomew was sent to study together with his two brothers: his older brother Stephen, and his younger brother Peter. His brothers learned successfully, but Bartholomew fell behind in his studies, even though the teacher gave him much special attention. The parents scolded the child, the teacher chastised him, and his classmates made fun of his lack of comprehension. Finally, Bartholomew besought the Lord with tears to grant him the ability to read.



Once, his father sent Bartholomew out after the horses in the field. Along the way he met an angel sent by God under the appearance of a monk. The Elder stood at prayer beneath an oak in a field. Bartholomew approached him, and bowing, waited for the Elder to finish praying. The monk blessed him, gave him

a kiss and asked what he wanted.

Bartholomew answered, "With all my soul I want to learn reading and writing. Holy Father, pray for me to God, that He may help me to become literate." The monk fulfilled Bartholomew's request, offering up his prayer to God. In blessing the child he said to him: "Henceforth, my child, God gives you to understand reading and writing, and in this you will surpass your brothers and peers" (See the famous M. Nesterov painting "Vision of Bartholomew").

Then the Elder took a vessel and gave Bartholomew a piece of prosphora. "Take, child, and eat," said he. "This is given to you as a sign of the grace of God, and for the understanding of Holy Scripture." The Elder wanted to leave, but Bartholomew asked him to visit at the home of his parents. His parents received their guest with joy and offered him their hospitality.

The Elder replied that it was proper to partake of spiritual nourishment first, and he bade their son to read the Psalter. Bartholomew began to read, and his parents were amazed at the change that had occurred with their son. In parting, the Elder prophetically said of Saint Sergius, "Your son shall be great before God and the people. He shall become a chosen habitation of the Holy Spirit."

After this the holy child read without difficulty and understood the contents of books. He became immersed in prayer with a special fervor, not missing a single church service. Already in childhood he imposed upon himself a strict fast. He ate nothing on Wednesdays and Fridays, and on the other days he sustained himself on bread and water.

Update for Sophia Rovnova

We continue to pray for Sophia

Rovnova who is getting closer and closer to coming to St Louis Children's Hospital for Selective Dorsal Rhizotomy surgery which should enable her to walk on her own.

You know that our parish, by the will of God, was able to raise the needed funds for the surgery. The papers from the hospital were sent to Sophia's family and they had to make a very long journey to the new capital of Kazakhstan Nur Sultan (former Russian town of Akmolinsk, Omsk region) to obtain their US

Visas. The Visas were issued to Sofia and her mother, but her father is yet to go to the US Embassy. Hopefully, he will be able to do so soon. Once he has his US Visa in his passport, the family will be buying their tickets to St Louis. We ask you to pray for the successful completion of the paperwork and their safe journey.



P.S. The photo of Sofia in her class room was taken the next day after their return from Kazakhstan.

Name That Psalm

From which Psalm is the excerpt below?

The Lord is my shepherd, and I shall not want. In a place of green pasture, there hath He made me to dwell; beside the water of rest hath He nurtured me. He hath converted my soul, He hath led me on the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they have comforted me.

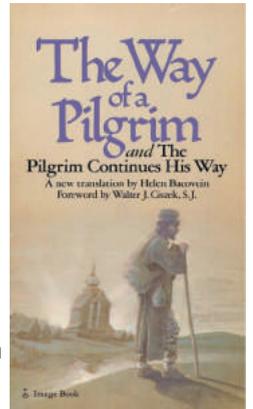
St Basil's Book Review: The Way of a Pilgrim *Catechumen Bryan Kopel*

The Way of a Pilgrim is a classic Orthodox Christian novel chronicling the spiritual and physical journey of a crippled pilgrim across 19th century Russia. The simple yet striking prose, much like the profound truths expressed within its pages, presents the adventure in terms accessible to even mature children. This does not leave it too sparse for transporting the reader into another time

and place, however. The struggles and temptations of the people are relatable, yet a distinct difference in the Christianized Russian life is both encouraging as examples of possible piety in our lives, and lamentable in how far our own culture is from such depictions. The Way of a Pilgrim's message on the power of persistent prayer can encourage the faith of any reader to grow in love for God and the adventures of life we encounter when we seek Him in every moment.

The church library has one copy of this

classic that can be checked out, but I present a word of caution on the epilogue: an overly simplistic and mechanistic process distilled from various teachings in the Philokalia presents an approach to prayer in a way that opens one up to prelest (spiritual delusion). Fr. Sergii recommends avoiding this. The rest of the book is highly recommended.



ATTENTION: Choir Practice Update

All parishioners are welcome to join the choir. All voices are needed. Choir practice will take place on Wednesday evenings, for the month of October, at 6:30 pm at the church.

Support The Parish Through Amazon

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Parish Prayer List

Nadia Danett — Health
Jackie (Xenia) Peck — Health
Nora (Zoe) Resz — Health

Keep our parishioners, and those who ask us to pray for them in your prayers this month. Contact Fr. Sergii 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.