



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

November 2021

Schedule of Services

- **Righteous John of Kronstadt**
Sun. Oct. 31 Vigil 6 P.M.
Mon. Nov 1 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **Kazan Icon of the Mother of God**
Thur. Nov 4 Moleben 9 A.M.
- **St Demetrios Memorial Saturday**
Sat. Nov 6 Panihida 9 A.M.
- **20th Sunday after Pentecost**
Righteous Tabitha
Sat. Nov 6 Vigil 5 P.M.
Sun. Nov 7 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Venerable Job of Pochaev**
Tue. Nov 9 Vigil 6 P.M.
Wed. Nov 10 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **21st Sunday after Pentecost**
Synaxis of Unmercenary Healers
Sat. Nov 13 Vigil 5 P.M.
Sun. Nov 14 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Great Martyr George the Trophy-Bearer**
Mon. Nov 15 Vespers and Matins 6 P.M.
Tue. Nov 16 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **22nd Sunday after Pentecost**
Synaxis of Archangel Michael
Sat. Nov 20 Vigil 5 P.M.
Sun. Nov 21 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **St Martin of Tours and St Stephen of Decani**
Tue. Nov 23 Vespers and Matins 6 P.M.
Wed. Nov 24 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **St John Chrysostom**
Fri. Nov 26 Divine Liturgy at House Springs 9 A.M.
- **23rd Sunday after Pentecost**
Martyrs Gurias, Samonas and Abibus
Sat. Nov 27 Vigil 5 P.M.
Sun. Nov 28 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
Beginning of Nativity Fast

The continuation of the discussion which appeared in Road to Emmaus (RTE) magazine eleven years ago which we offer in an abridged form.

SISTER S.: Translations are indispensable for us, but we mustn't forget that there is a depth of meaning in the original that is inaccessible to us. We have to respect this, to see the value of maintaining these old languages. This difficulty in translation is not only a matter of vocabulary—there is also the grammar of the old languages. Both Greek and Slavonic are inflected languages, which means that while in English, we use strings of prepositions and strict word order to get our meaning across, in both Greek and Slavonic, the words themselves change—for example, according to whether they are the subject or object—which means that Greek and Slavonic have a great deal more flexibility. You can change the word order in the sentence to add extra nuances or emphases, while if you did that in English, it would

Liturgical Languages and Living Tradition

Part II

change the meaning.

The Fathers used the structure of the language and all sorts of poetic rhetorical devices to add emphasis, meaning and beauty to their writings. Much of this beauty, meaning and precision is simply lost in translation. A translation can have its own beauty, but it can never be the original. It's no wonder that we English-speakers often find ourselves going around and around, wondering what we are missing when we read Orthodox spiritual works in translation.

If we take a very simple word in English, like "sin," we think we know what the word means—a transgression of God's law. The Greek word *amartia* actually means "to miss the mark," which helps us to understand what the Fathers meant when they used the word. This helps modern people also. Many people

today have an aversion to a word like sin because for them it is a legalistic term that is used to pound people over the head. In its essence, it means that your goal is union with God and anything that deflects you from that goal is a sin. If you understand this, it gives you a much deeper understanding of our relationship with God.

Another word that people react to is the word “heresy”—especially in the West where people immediately think of heretics being burned at the stake, which is what happened in some parts of Europe. The Fathers didn’t just come up with the word heresy to mean some kind of error of doctrine that will get you put on the bonfire. The root of the word is the Greek verb *haireo* which has a broad spectrum of meanings, but one of these meanings is to “choose your own idea.” The verb itself is not negative, it’s neutral. So, in this sense, it means that you choose your own idea rather than that of the Church.

There is a depth and history to these words, that if you understand even a little, it helps you to understand the mind of the Fathers, the mind of the Church, and you can explain to

people that a word like “sin” actually means missing the goal of your existence.

RTE: Then, when a language such as an Alaskan native dialect, or Spanish, or English doesn’t contain theologically precise terms for a word, it seems even more necessary for translators to use footnotes and commentary to explain the missing concept to a general reader or worshipper. Otherwise, it can end in the problems that eastern Christianity encountered where, at least partly, because of simplified equivalents of important theological terms in their native languages, some local churches veered off into unorthodox beliefs such as monophysitism.



To be Continued



Sophia and her parents are scheduled to arrive at St Louis on Monday, November 8. Her mother says they cannot believe this is happening to them and that Sophia is so close to a new phase in her life.

Please pray for Igor, Ludmila and Sophia as they will be beginning their journey to St Louis on Sunday, November 7.

Sophia Update

Winter Outdoor Preparations

Many of St. Basil’s parishioners gathered on Saturday, the 16th, to clean and prepare the grounds for the coming winter months. There were several flower bed areas that needed to be cleaned and a previously made path that needed to be reseeded with grass. Although the work was plenty, it was quickly and cheerfully completed by

those that came to help. Many of the workers consisted of members from the newly formed Brotherhood of St. Alexander Nevsky. Other parishioners were also there and enjoyed some refreshments and pizza after the work was completed. We encourage all to join in future work parties. Not only do they serve as good exercise and an opportunity to work alongside our brothers and sisters, but more importantly the work is completed to beautify our temple and to maintain its grounds.



Ask Your Priest

The priests have blessed Deacon Thomas to answer the question submitted for this section of the newsletter since the topic was addressed in his Pastoral School thesis, *A Patristic Reading of Thomas Aquinas' Teaching on the Essence of God*.

Q: I have heard that the Orthodox Church follows uncreated Grace and that the Western church follows created Grace. Can you explain the differences between these?

Deacon Thomas: Properly speaking, we have no doctrine of created Grace in the Orthodox Church. This is because Grace, as we understand It,

is always uncreated. Two of our most important saints, St. Maximus the Confessor and St. Gregory Palamas, state this explicitly. This word "uncreated" is significant. Uncreatedness is an attribute that God alone possesses because He alone stands outside of creation and is without origin. Simply, God is not created; He, instead, is the One Who creates. Because the Church employs the term "uncreated" to describe God's Grace, this means that the Church holds the Grace of God to be God Himself, insofar as only God is, properly speaking, uncreated. This uncreated Grace (often called Energy in the fathers) is God Himself in us working to deify us by conforming and uniting us to Himself. We receive this Grace at our Baptism and through all

of the Holy Mysteries, and we cooperate with It fully only when we unite our will totally with Christ's.

The notion of "created" grace is only found in the West, specifically in Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. In these groups, Grace is characterized as a created effect of God, which God Himself uses to communicate Himself supernaturally to mankind, but it is not understood to be God Himself. Thus, if we were to compare the two doctrines, we might do so by saying that, in Orthodoxy, God unites Himself to us directly through His Grace/Energy, Which is Himself; in heretical branches of Christianity, this union is thought to be effected by an intermediary-created grace.



Michael Slettevold was made a catechumen on

October 17th and is pictured with his sponsor, altar server Ivan Alekseev. Michael has been learning about the Orthodox Church and attending the Divine Services which have encouraged him to take the next step in his journey to joining the Orthodox Church. Please continue to pray for him as he continues his preparation.

New Catechumen at St. Basil's

Days As A Pilgrim

*A Visit to Holy Cross Monastery
By Bryan "Basil" Kopel*

many of us. Perhaps this dual distinction is the unavoidable outcome of the monastery's location at the boundary of this world and the Kingdom of Heaven, of the modern age and the ancient past. In my own mind, the monastery conjured up images of humble huts secreted away in the mist of time and space. My recent experience at Holy Cross Monastery in Wayne, West Virginia, revealed to me that its value to the Church today is measured not in its mystique, historical significance, nor a romantic escapism, but rather in the way it provides a blessed respite from the fleeting values of worldly life where we can receive spiritual healing. If we approach the outpost of prayer and repentance with quiet humility, our own journey to the heavenly city can be guided by the light of those who have drawn nearer still.

Unlike a secretive brotherhood, gang, or message board that cloaks itself in the allure of hidden wisdom, Holy Cross Monastery does not require any obscure initiation or invitation to access its spiritual treasures. Everyone is welcome to make arrangements for a visit with guest services. You can even call,

The relevance of the monastery in Christian life might appear both profound and mysterious to

email, and write to the monastery much like any other organization. God is always eager to share His good gifts with us, even when these gems are mined at the edge of our sinful society. Consider visiting <https://www.holycross.org/> to explore further.

The guest-master of Holy Cross, Father Philaret, will tailor your visit to your needs. You do not need to map out the days like we are so often tempted to do on our vacations. How often do we feel the need for a vacation from our vacation? Instead, after an honest explanation of your interest in visiting, your accommodations will be arranged without a fuss. Father Philaret was even so accommodating as to drive me from the airport past the normal closing of the monastery, but given that mine was a circumstance derived from the COVID-19 vaccine passport walkouts at the airport causing cancelled flights, I do advise making other arrangements for a ride to the monastery. Father Philaret will be happy to help you with those, too.

Do as I say, not as I do. My own visit was predicated upon the pressing question of my suitability for monastic life. I came with many questions and assumptions. Some of them were helpful and accurate, but I sometimes made a fool of myself by mistaking a partial understanding of concepts for an intuitive competence. To those who visit after me, might I suggest a

better way: approach the things of God as a humble child without trying to achieve a specific outcome. Assume that you do not know even the right questions. Set aside your own agendas to enter the monastery on its own terms.

The long and winding road through the Appalachian mountains is a scenic journey in its own right, but the immediate sense of separation from the world outside is best experienced by the lack of contact via the usual electronic mediums. Prepare to unplug from the hum of notifications on your phone and unwind from your way in the world. Instead, join the simple schedule of services, meals, and obediences that characterize the way of life at Holy Cross. You do not need to read a manual. The monks are accustomed to making visitors feel welcome and bearing with us patiently as we find our bearings. If you content yourself with being led, you will find what God has in store for you. Watch, listen, and imitate those who imitate Christ.

Even for someone like myself, who had adjusted to rising at 4 AM for long morning prayers before his visit, the focused silence of monastery life felt eerily unfamiliar, at first. Much like how the water of a raging river only reveals the contents of the ground beneath it when it becomes still in the calm of a large lake, the absent turbulence of worldly life outside the monastery clarifies how much of it we carry inside us only after a period of dissipation. The adjustment takes time, so do not despair when you do not immediately find the peace, answers, or experience you seek. Patiently persist and you will not be disappointed.

My own stay at the monastery was not characterized by a pivotal epiphany or miraculous event (although several encounters were unmistakably providential answers to prayers). Through prayer, silence, obedience, and several profound discussions with the monks during the course of our shared work, I learned important lessons about life that I have carried with me upon my return home. Wrestling with the disquiet in my own soul became easier because the distractions of life were set aside in the beautiful retreat of the mountains sanctified as holy ground. I was not left to wrestle through this spiritual struggle

alone: the monks were of great assistance in guiding me through these experiences.

The most important spiritual lesson of the journey was that we should always seek first the Kingdom of Heaven in the present moment. Knowing what God wants me to do generally at some point in the future does little to resolve the more pressing imperative of how to love those around me: the Most Holy Trinity, monks, brothers, angels, saints, and even the various rescued animals at the monastery. No matter where I go, or what profession God deems most suitable for me, I should never lose sight of this simple truth.

Likewise, one does not need to live as a monk to attain spiritual growth, and the monks are not all saints. We are all sinners, troublemakers, and children of God with various gifts. Instead of seeking only what is best for ourselves, healing, or deification for our own sake only, we should seek to use whatever good we have to the benefit of others. Life is a gift from God that we merely steward. The biggest mistake we can make is to hoard it selfishly.

I hope to stay longer than four days on my next pilgrimage to Holy Cross, and I do recommend taking an extended stay if you can manage it. It is often said that the church is a spiritual hospital, and as the monks often said to me, the monastery is the intensive care unit. If I left the monastery feeling both rejuvenated and unsettled by my own sins, then perhaps this is for the best. As Brother John explained, the spiritual life is not unlike cleaning out a garage: the more that you clear away, the more light that enters, and the more you see to clear. Do not be discouraged that there is more work than you anticipated, but instead, give thanks to God for the increasing presence of His light within you.



St. Basil's Wine Tasting

St. Basil's hosted its first ever wine tasting led by our very knowledgeable altar server, Jacob Laseter. Jacob has acquired a wealth of knowledge on wine throughout the years and chose to share it with St. Basil's. On Sunday, the 17th, many parishioners and their families gathered at the church to taste and learn about California wines. Jacob meticulously chose five wine varieties from California vineyards and explained their history, origin, and flavors. The tasting sampled a Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Zinfandel. Cheese and charcuterie were prepared to accompany the wines. We hope to have Jacob lead additional tastings focusing on other wine styles and groups.



St. Basil's is happy to announce that Reader Constantine Stade and his wife, Laura, welcomed their second child, Brendan Christopher Stade, on October 6th. His patron saint is St. Brendan. The family is doing well and we ask that you keep them in your prayers.

A New Birth at St. Basil's

St Basil's Icon Corner

Archangel Michael's icon is almost always on one of the deacon's doors on the Iconostasis. At St. Basil's, the icon of Archangel Michael is on the right hand side of the royal doors. The deacon's door on the left holds the icon of Archangel Gabriel. These archangels are usually depicted on these doors but it can also be that icons of Proto-Martyr Archdeacon Stephen, Hieromartyr Archdeacon Lawrence, or the Good Thief (who was crucified to the right of the Savior and said "Remember me when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom") can also be placed there. The images of the archangels on these doors further elaborate their roles as deacons of God and can be seen as a parallel to the earthly deacons which serve the Church and her services.

The Orthodox Church teaches that there are nine ranks of angels which are ranked from those closest to the Holy Trinity to those that are closer to humanity. The highest rank starts with Seraphim and is followed by Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels, and Angels.

Archangels are known as the heralds of good news and serve to reveal God's will to mankind through announcing prophecies and proclaiming the knowledge and understanding of this will to further strengthen God's people.

True to his role, Archangel Michael has interceded multiple times and comes to aid those defending the faith. Archangel Michael is typically asked to intercede for those in battle and to protect those being attacked by enemies. This is why Archangel Michael is depicted with a sword and sometimes shield to show him as the Chief Commander of the Heavenly Hosts. He can also be seen carrying a translucent orb which can be meant to remind us of his bodiless nature since he is ultimately an angel and not of this earth but of God's Heavenly Kingdom. Holy Archangel Michael, pray for us!



Newsletter Activity

Cryptogram

J P V R Q P S J P V R N U Q J K R J P V R
U N N P G K L V J L O C N C G F R P D X Y

The phrase has had each letter replaced with a different one. For example an A might be represented by a Z. Decrypt the letters to reveal the phrase.

October Name that Psalm Answer: Psalm 22

Psalm 22 is used in the service of preparation for Holy Communion, and as the prokeimenon in Vespers for Tuesdays.

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 November, at 6:30 pm at the church.

Support The Parish Through Amazon

You can support St. Basil's by choosing the parish as your charity of choice when you shop online through Amazon at no additional cost. Simply go to Smile.Amazon.com, sign in, select "St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church" as your charity and start shopping! Amazon will donate a portion of eligible purchases directly to the church.

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.