

St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church

February 2023



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
Protopriest Radomir Chkautovich
Priest Thomas Nichols
Deacon Ephraim Galloway

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

• Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee

- New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia
- Saturday, Feb. 4 Vigil 5 P.M.
- Sunday, Feb. 5 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.

• Blessed Xenia of St. Petersburg

- Monday, Feb. 6 Moleben 9 A.M.

• Sunday of the Prodigal Son

- Three Holy Hierarchs
- Archpastoral Visit
- Saturday, Feb. 11 Vigil 5 P.M.

- Sunday, Feb. 12 Meeting of the Hierarch 9:30 A.M. followed by the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy

• Meeting of the Lord in the Temple

- Tuesday, Feb. 14 Vigil 6 P.M.
- Wednesday, Feb. 15 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.

• Meatfare memorial Saturday

- Saturday, Feb. 18 Panihida 9 A.M.

• Sunday of the Last Judgment

- Meatfare Sunday
- Saturday, Feb. 18 Vigil 5 P.M.

- Sunday, Feb. 19 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.

• Forgiveness Sunday

- Cheesefare Sunday
- Saturday, Feb. 25 Vigil 5 P.M.
- Sunday, Feb. 26 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M. Followed by the Vespers with the Rite of Forgiveness

• Monday, February 27 — Beginning of the Great Lent

- Monday, Feb. 27 Great Compline with the Great Canon 6 P.M.
- Tuesday, Feb. 28 Great Compline with the Great Canon 6 P.M.

FEAST OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT

St. Basil's celebrated its parish feast day the week after the Nativity of the Lord on the feast of the Circumcision of the Lord and Holy Hierarch Basil the Great. The parish started its festivities with Vigil served on the evening of Friday, January 13th. The services then continued into Saturday with a Lesser Blessing of the Waters (as is custom for a parish to serve on its feast day) in the morning followed by the Divine Liturgy.

The services then spilled out of the temple as the parish made a procession around the church led by the Cross and carrying its parish icon. Although the morning was brisk, the parishioners sang their petitions to the Holy Hierarch Basil, that he would always pray to the Lord on behalf of His faithful.

As Father Sergii mentioned during his address to the parish following the Divine Liturgy, the patron saint of the church was chosen by St. Basil's founder, Reposed Father Martin Swanson, specifically so that the parish feast day would never fall during a fasting period. Therefore, the parishioners were able to enjoy a bountiful banquet after the Divine Liturgy while enjoying a live performance by parishioner and world renowned violinist, Julia Sakharova.

Thank you to all who served, cooked, and participated in any way on the parish feast day!

Pictures of the feast continue on the next page.





DEACON EPHRAIM IS AWARDED DOUBLE ORARION

On the Third Day of Nativity, the feast of the Holy Protomartyr Archdeacon Stephen, Metropolitan Nicholas, the First Hierarch of the Russian Church Outside of Russia, made his first official visit to our diocesan cathedral in Chicago. Concelebrating at the Divine Liturgy with the First hierarch, in the presence of the Kursk Root Icon of the Mother of God, were Archbishop Peter, Archbishop Daniel (OCA) and Bishop Longing (Serbian Orthodox Church). Seventeen priests and eight protodeacons and deacons concelebrated with the hierarchs.

At the Small Entrance, our parish clergyman Deacon Ephraim Galloway was awarded with the right to wear the double orarion.

We congratulate Deacon Ephraim on this award, which is usually given to deacons for "length of service or other distinction". Since Deacon Ephraim was a deacon for only five years, he could not have received this reward for "length of service". But our ruling hierarch desired to bestow upon our deacon this reward "for diligent and sincere service to the Holy Church" (Archbishop Peter's words).

Fr Deacon Ephraim loves the Divine Services, takes time to prepare for them, and sees the importance of maintaining the faithfulness to the liturgical tradition of the Russian Church.

May God grant our Father Deacon Ephraim many years of service to the Holy Church, so that he could derive true joy when honoring the Most Holy Trinity, the Theotokos and the saints through worship.



IS MORMONISM CHRISTIAN?: PART 1

ADAPTED FROM INSTITUTE FOR RELIGIOUS RESEARCH

Is Mormonism Christian? This may seem like a puzzling question to many Mormons, as well as to some Christians. Mormons will note that they include the Bible among the four books which they recognize as Scripture, and that belief in Jesus Christ is central to their faith, as evidenced by their official name, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Furthermore, many Christians have heard the Mormon Tabernacle Choir sing Christian hymns and are favorably impressed with the Mormon commitment to high moral standards and strong families. Doesn't it follow that Mormonism is Christian?

To fairly and accurately resolve this question we need to carefully compare the basic doctrines of the Mormon religion with the basic doctrines of historic, biblical Christianity. To represent the Mormon position we have relied on the following well-known Mormon doctrinal books, the first three of which are published by the Mormon Church: *Gospel Principles* (1997), *Achieving a Celestial Marriage* (1976), and *A Study of the Articles of Faith* (1979) by Mormon Apostle James E. Talmage, as well as *Doctrines of Salvation* (3 vols.) by the tenth Mormon President and prophet Joseph Fielding Smith, *Mormon Doctrine* (2nd ed., 1979) by Mormon apostle Bruce R. McConkie and *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*.

1. Is There More Than One True God?

The Bible teaches and orthodox Christians through the ages have believed that there is only one True and Living God and apart from Him there are no other Gods (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10,11; 44:6,8; 45:21,22; 46:9; Mark 12:29-34).

By contrast, the Mormon Church teaches that there are many gods (Book of Abraham 4:3ff), and that we can become gods and goddesses in the celestial kingdom (Doctrine and Covenants 132:19-20; *Gospel Principles*, p. 245; *Achieving a Celestial Marriage*, p. 130). It also teaches that those who achieve godhood will have spirit children who will worship and pray to them, just as we worship and pray to God the Father (*Gospel Principles*, p. 302).

2. Was God Once a Man Like Us?

The Bible teaches and orthodox Christians through the ages have believed that God is Spirit (John 4:24; 1 Timothy 6:15,16), He is not a man (Numbers 23:19; Hosea 11:9; Romans 1:22, 23), and has always (eternally) existed as God — all powerful, all knowing, and everywhere present (Psalm 90:2; 139:7-10; Isaiah 40:28; Luke 1:37).

By contrast, the Mormon Church teaches that God the Father was once a man like us who progressed to become a God and has a body of flesh and bone (Doctrine and Covenants 130:22; "God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens!" from *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 345-347; *Gospel Principles*, p. 9; *Articles of Faith*, p. 430; *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 321). Indeed, the Mormon Church teaches that God himself has a father, and a grandfather, *ad infinitum* (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 373; *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 577).

3. Are Jesus and Satan Spirit Brothers?

The Bible teaches and orthodox Christians through the ages have believed that Jesus is the unique Son of God; he has always existed as God, and is co-eternal and co-equal with the Father (John 1:1, 14; 10:30; 14:9; Colossians 2:9). While never less than God, at the appointed time He laid aside the glory He shared with the Father (John 17:4, 5; Philippians 2:6-11) and was made flesh for our salvation; His incarnation was accomplished through being conceived supernaturally by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin (Matthew 1:18-23; Luke 1:34-35).

By contrast, the Mormon Church teaches that Jesus Christ is our elder brother who progressed to godhood, having first been procreated as a spirit child by Heavenly Father and a heavenly mother; He was later conceived physically through intercourse between Heavenly Father and the virgin Mary (D&C 93:21; *Journal of Discourses*, 1:50-51; *Gospel Principles*, p. 11-13; *Achieving a Celestial Marriage*, p. 129; Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 546-547; 742; Ezra Taft Benson, *Come unto Christ*, p. 4; Robert L. Millet, *The Mormon Faith: Understanding Restored Christianity*, p. 31). Mormon doctrine affirms that Jesus, all angels, Lucifer, all demons, and all human beings are originally spirit brothers and sisters (Abraham 3:22-27; Moses 4:1-2; *Gospel Principles*, pp. 17-18; *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 192).

To Be Continued

INSTRUCTION FOR SPIRITUAL CHILDREN: PART 1

ARCHBISHOP THEOPHAN OF POLTAVA (†1940)

On Leading a Focused Life while Living in the World

You are asking: how can I combine my desire to be focused, to lead an undistracted life with care for salvation of my neighbor? Let me answer with the words of St. Gregory the Dialogist: We have to choose a middle ground between complete seclusion and life among the people: we need to be focused, but – when a situation provides itself – do what we should for the salvation of our neighbor. Know your measure.

Tiredness during Prayer

You are asking: What should I do to prevent extreme tiredness from affecting my prayer? Since you did not specify about what prayer you are asking: private or communal, I am going to address both. When tiredness starts to overcome you during the Divine service, you should pray the Jesus Prayer – this will help you to stay focused on prayer. If the tiredness attacks you during your private prayer, then you should force yourself to continue praying. If this drives tiredness away, it was a temptation from the evil one. If the tiredness remains, the prayer can be shortened. It is better to keep your prayer shorter but pray with your mind fully engaged and with contrition of heart.

Meaning of Penance

“At confession I was told, among other things, that when I notice that I am sinning and lacking attention, I should make a few prostrations. I wanted to ask you about this before and now am asking for your guidance”. It is good to do that, but provided you have a correct understanding of what you are doing. Penance is not a punishment – in the legalistic sense of the word – for a transgression, but it is a spiritual therapy which has it as its goal to deliver the person from a certain ailment. The number of prostrations depends on the kind of transgression or sin.

About Temptations

About your temptations I can say that you do not need to be stressed about them or lose hope. There has never been an ascetic who did not have to fight temptations. Abba Zosima said: “Eliminate temptations and intrusive thoughts and there will be no saints”.

The goal is not to live a temptations-free life but to conquer them. Venerable John of the Ladder writes: “We should not be dismayed if we find that our passions are stronger at the beginning of our monastic life than they were in our life in the world. For we have to remove the causes of sickness, and then health will come to us. The beasts were there in hiding all the time, only they did not show themselves” (*The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. Step 26).

In particular, this can be said about temptations of the flesh. “Throughout your life, do not trust your body, and do not rely on it till you stand before Christ.” “When the devil wishes to tie two people to each other by a shameful bond, he works on the inclinations of both of them, and then lights the fire of passion.” “Do not expect to confute the demon of fornication by arguing with him; for with nature on his side, he has the best of the argument.” “Offer to the Lord the weakness of your nature, fully acknowledging your own incapacity, and you will receive imperceptibly the gift of chastity” (*The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. Step 15).

During the attacks of impure passions, according to the instructions of Venerable Barsanuphius the Great, we should pray: “Lord, deliver me from my sins and from impure passions!” or “Lord Jesus Christ, deliver me from shameful passions!” He who is beset by those passions should, first of all, get away from the sources of seduction and, in general, learn to love silence and solitude.

To Be Continued

NEW CATECHUMENS AT ST. BASIL'S

Lauren Renz and Jeremy Anderson were made catechumens before the Divine Liturgy on January 22nd at St. Basil's. They have both been dutifully attending weekly catechumen classes with Father Thomas and other catechumens and inquirers. Please keep Lauren and Jeremy in your prayers that our Lord may continue to guide them in their Orthodox journey.



BAPTISM AT ST. BASIL'S



The infant Lilliosa was baptised at St. Basil's on January 1st. Lilliosa is the second child born to Micah and Rachel Kirn and baby sister to Noelle Kirn. The young family was baptised into the Orthodox Church at St. Basil's in 2021 and now present their newborn as a young handmaiden of God. Pictured to the left is the young child with her family and godmother, Tetyana Webster, on the day of her baptism. May God grant Lilliosa many years!

ALTAR SERVER PARTY

On the Sunday after Theophany, January 22, the St Basil's altar servers met together in the parish hall for a modest party. Our altar servers, ranging in age from those who are in their seventies to those who are only 7 seven years old, provide a much needed help during the Divine Services. Thirteen men (plus the clergy) gathered for fellowship and good time. A variety of pizzas, meat balls, buffalo chicken dip, ice cream and assorted snacks were enjoyed, with some wine for the adults and pop for the children.

Besides having fun and enjoying tasty food, such gatherings have a spiritually profitable part, as well. The younger men were asked what in their opinion is the most important quality an altar server should have. Several boys answered in unison: "To be quiet!" They were almost right, for what the priests look for in the altar servers is a prayerful disposition.

We are glad that we have so many young men who want to serve in the altar. In fact, there are so many of them that a schedule was created telling when each of them can serve. Most of them know the Divine Services rather well and they are in the altar both for the Vigils and the Divine Liturgies. We can only thank God for providing us with such faithful altar servers!



Praying for catechumens is a very important responsibility of an Orthodox Christian. So important, that a special litany or series of petitions in the Divine Liturgy is completely dedicated to asking the Lord to have mercy on all catechumens preparing for illumination. *"Let us the faithful pray for the catechumens, that the Lord will have mercy on them."*

Let us fulfill the words of the litany and pray for our fellow brothers and sisters:

*Alexander
Alexander
Rob, Melinda and family*

*Marshal
Misty and children
Tyler*

*Lauren
Jeremy*

CATECHUMEN CORNER

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Archpriest Martin Swanson — Repose
Katherine Swanson — Health
Archimandrite Seraphim — Health
Jackie (Xenia) Peck — Health
Photini Mills — 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.

Tatiana Zyryanova — Health
Gloria Pappas — Repose
Julianna Campbell — Health
Dimitry Johnson — Health
John Surgant — Health