

St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church

May 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

- **Blessed Matrona of Moscow**
 - Tue., May 2 Moleben 9 A.M.
- **Great Martyr George**
 - Fri., May 5 Vigil 6 P.M.
 - Sat., May 6 Divine Liturgy 9 A.M.
- **Fourth Sunday of Pascha**
 - **Sunday of the Paralytic**
 - Sat., May 6 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., May 7 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Mid-Pentecost**
 - Tue., May 9 Vespers and Matins 6 P.M.
 - Wed., May 10 Divine Liturgy followed by the Lesser Blessing of Water 8 A.M.
- **Fifth Sunday of Pascha**
 - **Sunday of the Samaritan Woman**
 - Sat., May 13 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., May 14 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
 - **Venerable Job of Pochaev, Righteous Job the Much-Suffering and Holy Royal Martyr and Passion-bearer Nicholas**
 - Fri., May 19 Moleben 9 A.M.
- **Sixth Sunday of Pascha**
 - **Sunday of the Blind Man**
 - **Apostle John the Theologian**
 - Sat., May 20 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., May 21 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
 - **Ascension of the Lord (Great Feast)**
 - Wed., May 24 Vigil 6 P.M.
 - Thur., May 25 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **Seventh Sunday of Pascha**
 - **Sunday of the Holy Fathers of First Ecumenical Council**
 - Sat., May 27 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., May 28 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.

REMEMBERING THE ROYAL PASSION-BEARER TSAR NICHOLAS ON HIS NATIVITY

Holy Royal Passion-bearer Nicholas, the last Emperor of the Russian Empire, was born on May 6/19, 1868. The birthday of the Tsar-Martyr has always been remembered by the Orthodox Christians, more so abroad where the Royal Family was glorified in 1981. In Russia, under the godless regime, the name of the last emperor was smeared with countless lies, and even mentioning of his name in the positive key could easily lead one to execution or imprisonment.

The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia glorified the Tsar-Martyr



in 1981. Then in 2000 the glorification of the Royal Family in Russia paved the way to the future reconciliation of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad – the two lungs of the one body, which were forced to live administratively separate lives for almost 80 years.

After the bloody revolution swept over Russia, Tsar Nicholas remained an image of Christ-like suffering. Almost all those who were close to him in times of peace left him and, like Righteous Job's friends, accused him of crimes he had never committed. The crowds which just recently had been praising him were now deriding him. "Crucify him", was heard from every corner, while the former friends kept silent "for the fear of the Jews".

The sovereign, however, endured all of it with meekness, forgiving his slanderers. His longsuffering earned him greater glory than his illustrious reign. Being pious from his childhood, during his entire life the sovereign tried to imitate Righteous Job the Much-Suffering and Holy Hierarch Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia.

"I was born on the day of Job the Much-Suffering and I am predestined to suffer", he said long before the sorrowful days. The sovereign had drunk the cup of his suffering fully. However, he who suffers with Christ will be glorified with Him. Our Saviour has crowned the earthly monarch with a crown of unfading glory in the Heavenly Kingdom.

ICONOGRAPHY CONTINUES AT ST. BASIL'S



Iconographers Ivan Storchak and Roman Martynenko continue to work hard and tirelessly on frescoing the walls of the altar in our temple. The laborious task started in March and in only a few months, the fruits of this blessed work can be admired. Following traditional church iconography guidelines, the iconographers have written Christ Enthroned in the center with St. Basil the Great on His right and St. John Chrysostom on His left. At this stage of work, the finer details of the icons such as their hands and faces as well as vestment details are being added each day. May God continue to bless and strengthen Ivan and Roman in their work for God's glory!

A reminder that this iconography work is funded by the generous donations of the faithful which can be deposited in the box specifically allocated for this project near the candle kiosk.



Dear brothers and sisters!

AN OPEN LETTER FROM A TRAPEZA TEAM MEMBER

I would like to ask a little help and understanding regarding our meals on Sundays.

Our brothers and sisters in Christ, with love and dedication, are spending their time away from their families, as well as their money to make wonderful and tasty meals for us on the Day of the Lord. Sundays are set aside to give thanks to God for everything that He has done for us, and also for us to know better and love each other in our small (but growing) parish family!

We need to remember, when we are getting food on our plates, that there are many members of our parish family who are still in line and waiting for their turn to get food. Do not pile up food on your plate but rather come back for seconds. It is very sad for the trapeza members to see so much food end up in the trash, with some of it untouched.

Teach your children to appreciate the food which they get on their plates, for there is much labor, financial resources and time behind every Sunday meal. Please teach your children to take only what they know they are going to eat. Besides wasting the food, we deprive those who are at the end of the line of anything to eat.

Remember the basic Christian formula: we are to sacrifice ourselves for others, not expecting others to sacrifice themselves for us.

BAPTISM AT ST. BASIL'S

Newly Illumined Misty and her children were baptized at St. Basil's on Lazarus Saturday, thereby following their husband and father, Adam Stiller, into the Orthodox Church. Pictured on the right is the entire family with their sponsors, Nicole Steineger and Elizabeth and Daniel Simpson.



Below is an interview with the matriarch, Misty, where she recounts her and her family's experience while they prepared to join the Orthodox faith. May God grant them many years!

Where did you (Misty) grow up? How long have you and Adam known each other?

I was born and raised here in Saint Louis, about a ten-minute drive from St. Basil's current location. Adam and I met and dated in high school, then married in college about twenty years ago.

Can you tell us a little bit about your family?

Adam and I have four children that we home-school, ages 9-14. We're deeply rooted in the area—my parents, Adam's parents, and all four of our siblings and their families (all Protestants) live in Saint Louis as well. We're the first Orthodox Christians on either side of the family.

What can you share about your experience with the catechumen process being taught by your husband, Adam?

It was a blessing to have the catechumenate fit our family. We read some very helpful introductory books (or more often listened to them—we love audiobooks!), and we learned and discussed the Creed. But I think the most powerful parts of the process were (1) the practical side, just attending the services regularly and staying for trapeza often, and (2) informal discussion on all our questions as they came up.

How did you explain this new faith to your children given the wide age differences from your oldest to your youngest?

Slowly! It was a multi-year process to introduce, explain, and finally enter into Orthodoxy. And we

always welcomed their questions.

Are there any specific books or materials you would recommend for parents to use with their children that you found useful?

Early on, the Simpson family gifted us prayer books designed for children—these were super helpful. There are two extended parables by Elder Cleopa (we got them on Audible) that the kids loved. But the majority of the input for the kids came through conversation. Adam or I would read something, and then talk with the kids about what we were learning. We had lots of good, and challenging, conversations!

There can be a lot of new things for children to get accustomed to in the Orthodox Church (confession, communion, etc.) How did you prepare your family for these new practices?

We talked about difficult or confusing points well ahead of time so the kids would know what to expect. It was important for us to avoid surprises wherever possible. It helped that Adam had already gone through confession, baptism, and communion and could describe things with a lot of detail. Talking about the reasons behind our practice, the roots in Scripture and Tradition, was also good for the older kids.

Who are your patron saints and why did you choose them?

My patron saint is Emilia, the mother of Saint Basil and four other saints. My main role is being a home-schooling mom, so her example and prayers seem super relevant to my life. We didn't plan on becoming Orthodox fourteen years ago when we started having kids, but (thank God!) each of them share their birth names with a saint, so those decisions were easy: Penelope, Silas, Amos, and Evangeline (named for the Annunciation).

Is there anything else you would like for the parish to know?

We're so grateful for your warm welcome. Thank you for bringing us into your family!



FOCUS ON FOCUS

We will serve the FOCUS Sunday dinner again on the following four Sundays from roughly 3:45 to 6:00 P.M. – **June 11, August 13, October 8, and November 19**. If you are interested in helping, either by providing food for or helping cook it with the Sisterhood, or by distributing the meal and pantry items at Archangel Michael parish in the city, please notify Fr. Sergii or Joseph Steineger.

In addition to offering a Sunday evening meal, we are also asked to help provide goods for the FOCUS pantry. For the month of May, we have been asked to supply **towels (not thick bath towels, but thinner style dish towels), men's underwear, men's short sleeve dress or polo shirts (medium and large sizes), and men's jeans and khakis (medium and large, tall and short). Shirts, jeans and khakis can be either new or used, in good condition.** Currently, these are the only clothing requests from the pantry so please only provide these listed goods. A flier is posted in the trapeza with tear-away tabs for reminders. Please donate these goods in the large plastic container in our parish coat closet **before May 21**.



NEW CATECHUMEN AT ST. BASIL'S

Father Thomas read the prayers for the making of a catechumen over Jackson Pecaut before the Divine Liturgy on April 2nd. Jackson has been attending catechumen classes given by Father Thomas and will continue to learn about the Orthodox Faith. Please keep Jackson in your prayers that our Lord may continue to guide him in his Orthodox journey.

VENERABLE BARSANUPIUS THE GREAT AND JOHN THE PROPHET

For the past three months in our newsletters we were offering to our readers *Instructions to Spiritual Children*, compiled from the letters of Archbishop Theophan of Poltava (†1940). In helping his correspondents to gain an unconfused knowledge of spiritual life, Archbishop Theophan would often draw from the extremely influential ascetic source *Guidance to Spiritual Life in Answers to the Questions of the Disciples* by Venerable Barsanuphius the Great and John the Prophet who lived in the Palestinian desert in the 6th century.

In the next several issues of our newsletter, selected sections from *Guidance to Spiritual Life* will be offered for your spiritual benefit.

Venerable Barsanuphius the Great and John the Prophet

The saints' answers to the questions of those seeking guidance in spiritual life

13. Longsuffering is the mother of all good. Look at Moses, who chose for himself *rather to suffer with the people of God than to have the pleasure of sin for a time* (Heb. 11:25).

17. First, I will accuse you: you call yourself a sinner, but in fact you do not show that you acknowledge this. One who acknowledges himself to be a sinner [...] never contradicts anyone, does not quarrel with anyone, does not become angry at anyone, but considers everyone better and more intelligent than himself [...] We have not yet attained to the point of considering ourselves sinners. He who loves the one who accuses him is most wise (cf. Prov. 9:8). [...] Behold, O brother, how we are made a mockery: we only speak with the lips, but in deeds we show something entirely different.



21. You know, O brother, that if one does not endure vexations, he will not behold glory, either; and if he is not cleansed of gall, he will not experience sweetness. You have entered into the midst of the brethren and into the midst of various incidents in order to be heated and tested – gold is not tested in any other way than by fire. Know, my brother, that every thought which is not preceded by the calmness of humility does not come from God but clearly from the left side. Our Lord comes with quietness, but everything from the enemy comes with disturbance and unquietness. Although the demons also show themselves clothed in sheepskins, nonetheless, being rapacious they are revealed by means of the disturbance which they cause.

35. When we pray and God delays in hearing our prayer, He does this for our benefit, so as to teach us longsuffering; wherefore we need not become downcast, saying: “We prayed and were not heard.” God knows what is profitable for a man. [...]

47. Do you desire to be delivered from sorrows and not to be weighed down by them? – Expect greater ones, and you will find peace. Remember Job and the other saints – what sorrows they endured; acquire their patience and your spirit will be consoled. [...]

62. [...] one who is concerned for his salvation should by no means ask questions in order to obtain knowledge only, for *knowledge puffeth up* (I Cor. 8:1), as the apostle says. But to ask concerning the passions, and concerning how one should pass his life, that is, how to be saved, is most fitting; for this is necessary and leads one to humility. And humility is a shortened path to salvation, for it has been said: *I was humbled and the Lord saved me* (Ps. 114:6). Likewise, one of the saints says: “A humble-minded monk is not curious to know the mysteries, but the proud one pries into God’s judgments” (Ven. John of the Ladder 25:11).

79. Perfect humility of wisdom consists of bearing reproaches, and dishonor, and the rest which Our Teacher Jesus suffered... A sign of the fact that a man has touched on perfect prayer is the fact that he is no longer disturbed, even though the whole world might offend him.

To be continued

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
Rob, Melinda and family
Marshal
Tyler
Lauren*

*Jeremy
Reid, Amber, and Charles
Doc
Jackson
Jill*

CATECHUMEN CORNER

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Archpriest Martin Swanson — Repose
Katherine Swanson — Health
Archimandrite Seraphim — Health
Photini Mills — Health
Tatiana Zyryanova — Health
Gloria Pappas — Repose

Julianna Campbell — Health
Dimitry Johnson — Health
Inna Dagaeva — Health
Mark Wiebenga — Health
Ekaterina Pavlenko — Health
Archpriest Moses Berry — 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.