

St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church

July 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

- **Holy Hierarch John, Archbishop of Shanghai and San Francisco, the Wonderworker**
 - Fri., June 30 Vigil 6 P.M.
 - Sat., July 1 Divine Liturgy 9 A.M.
- **Fourth Sunday after Pentecost**
 - **Holy Apostle Jude**
 - Sat., July 1 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., July 2 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Nativity of Holy Prophet John the Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord**
 - Thur., July 6 Vigil 6 P.M.
 - Fri., July 7 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **Fifth Sunday after Pentecost**
 - **Tikhvin Icon of the Mother of God**
 - Sat., July 8 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., July 9 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Holy Pre-eminent Apostles Peter and Paul**
 - Tue., July 11 Vigil 6 P.M.
 - Wed., July 12 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **Sixth Sunday after Pentecost**
 - Sat., July 15 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., July 16 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Holy Royal Martyrs and Passion-bearers**

- **Tsar Nicholas, Tsaritsa Alexandra, Crown Prince Alexy, Grand Duchesses Olga, Tatiana, Maria and Anastasia**
 - Mon., July 17 Moleben 9 A.M.
- **Venerable Sergii of Radonezh**
 - **New Venerable Martyrs Grand Duchess Elizabeth and Barbara**
 - Mon., July 17 Vigil 6 P.M.
 - Tue., July 18 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **Kazan Icon of the Mother of God**
 - Fri., July 21 Moleben 9 A.M.
- **Seventh Sunday after Pentecost**
 - **Venerable Anthony of the Kiev Caves**
 - Sat., July 22 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., July 23 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Great Princess Olga**
 - Mon., July 24 Moleben 9 A.M.
- **Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Great Prince Vladimir**
 - Thur., July 27 Vigil 6 P.M.
 - Fri., July 28 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **Eighth Sunday after Pentecost**
 - Sat., July 29 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., July 30 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.

Due to the ongoing work of frescoing of the church and the activities associated with erection of the scaffolding in the center of the nave, the schedule of the Divine Services might change. The changes will be conveyed to the parishioners via email and to the general public via Facebook posts.

ICONOGRAPHY CONTINUES AT ST. BASIL'S

With the blessing of Archbishop Peter, iconographers Ivan Storchak and Roman Martynenko are finishing their work in the altar by adding the images of Righteous John of Kronstadt (on the northern side) and Holy Hierarch John of Shanghai and San Francisco (on the southern side). The photos presented here show Ivan (on the left) and Roman (on the right) writing the final details for the beloved saints.

Starting in July, preparations will be underway to erect scaffolding in the center of the nave to begin the iconography in the center dome of the temple. Please keep Roman and Ivan in your prayers as they continue on this most difficult area for iconography work.

A reminder: the iconography 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.



FOCUS ON FOCUS

Fr. Matthew sends his appreciation and gratitude to everyone who served on June 11th! Thank you for your kind service to the FOCUS ministry. We will serve the FOCUS Sunday dinner again on the following three Sundays from roughly 3:45 to 6:00 P.M. – **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.

For the month of July, we have been asked to supply the FOCUS Pantry with **hygiene kits** again. Please look for an email from Fr. Sergii with details about how to supply materials for the hygiene kits. A flier is posted in the trapeza with tear-away tabs for reminders. Please donate the hygiene goods in the large plastic container in our parish coat closet **before July 23.**

If you remember how to use “Sign-Up Genius,” you may go to the site with the QR code above.



Scan QR code with a QR code scanner from any smart phone

BAPTISMS AT ST. BASIL'S

Pictured on the left, the infant Adam was baptized by Father Sergii on June 1st. Adam is the newborn son of St. Basil's guests, iconographer Roman and his wife, Ekaterina.

Marshal Berra, Alexander Ligman, and Tyler Hensley (pictured from left to right in the far right picture) were baptized at St. Basil's on Saturday June 17th by Father Thomas. All three young men have been preparing to join the Orthodox Church by attending



services and catechumenate classes over the last year and have now been reborn into their new lives as Orthodox Christians.

May God grant the newly illumined many years!

Below, we also include an interview with the newly illumined and wed Jeremy and Lauren Anderson. Both Jeremy and Lauren were catechized, baptized, and married at St. Basil's but since then, have moved to Texas.

Where did you both grow up?

Lauren – Santa Barbara, CA

Jeremy – High Point, NC

Since the both of you didn't grow up in St. Louis, what brought you both to the area?

Both of us moved for work, Lauren works in the construction tech industry and Jeremy in medical device.

How did you hear about the Orthodox Church and what made you want to convert?

We had been in a long search for truth and after multiple failed attempts heard about Eastern Orthodoxy through an Orthodox apologist on YouTube who encouraged listeners to attend liturgy. Once we started going to divine liturgy and getting to know the parish community, there was no turning back!

How did you both meet?

Lauren – We lived in the same apartment complex and met in a common area. I made a comment on a politically charged mug he was drinking out of, and it was all up from there!

What was something memorable about your first time attending an Orthodox service?

Lauren – The beautiful sounds and scent of the censer and the bright colors and iconography. Before Orthodoxy I didn't have any religious background, feeling the presence of God for the first time was something indescribable.

Jeremy – Being raised protestant, church services often seemed like a business/marketing "feel-good" pitch, thus the serious and reverent nature of the liturgy was magnificent and was nothing like I had ever experienced. I also loved that the children and the adults worshiped together.

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

Lauren – St. Laura of Cordoba

Jeremy – St. Jeremiah the Prophet

Fr. Thomas made it easy, encouraging us to pick patron saints close to our names per direction of Archbishop Peter.

What has been your favorite thing about being Orthodox so far?

The beauty and fullness of faith has brought us a profound sense of peace and purpose to our lives.

What do you most look forward to as an Orthodox Christian?

We are so early on our journey! So excited to continue learning about the faith and participating in the sacraments. We are now attending Holy Mother of God in Georgetown, TX which is also in the Diocese of Chicago and Mid-America.

Do you have a favorite feast or liturgical service so far?

Any of the services during Bright Week and Saturday Panikhidas.



Is there anything else you would like to share with the parish?

We wanted to give our deepest gratitude to our sponsors Theodore, Nicole, Rachel, Micah, and Fr. Thomas for guiding us through the most important journey of our lives. Glory to God!

VENERABLE SERGII AS AN IMAGE OF SPIRITUAL POVERTY

A SERMON BY ARCHPRIEST MICHAEL BOIKO (†2002)

TRANSLATED BY NUN CORNELIA (REES)

Holy Hierarch Aleksii, Metropolitan of Moscow and Wonderworker of All Russia (†1378), when perceiving his impending departure from this world to the next, began to ponder this question: To whom should he pass on the hierarchical throne of Moscow and All Russia? And his gaze rested upon the best successor – a holy man, Father Sergii, the wonderworker of Radonezh. He went to him with this proposal and wanted to place his hierarchical cross upon him, but was unexpectedly met with the word: “From my youth I have not been a wearer of gold, and especially in my old age I want to remain poor. You won’t find what you are looking for in me, for I am a sinful man and worse than all people.” And these were the words of a man who was worthy for his holy life to receive from God the gift of clairvoyance, the gift of healing; and he even raised a youth from the dead. He was worthy to be visited by the Mother of God and the apostles Peter and John the Theologian. And this man considered himself worse than everyone in the world!



Archpriest Michael Boiko

Why did he call himself the worst of all people? Because even in his youth, when he planned to leave the sinful world and go to the forest hermitage, he heeded the words of the Lord in the Holy Gospels: *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*; and he strove all his life to attain this spiritual poverty. As we see, hear, and are convinced, he truly attained it.

What is this spiritual poverty? It is, first of all, the awareness of oneself as a good-for-nothing and sinful person, an “unprofitable servant”, as the Lord Jesus Christ teaches. For only such a spiritual awareness forms an insurmountable barrier to the most destructive human passion – pride, which is the main obstacle on the spiritual path to the Kingdom of Heaven.



Painting of Venerable Sergii

Therefore, as we have come to God’s church on the feast day of the saint to honor the great ascetic of Christ, we naturally would want to be vouchsafed the crown that our holy father Sergii of Radonezh received. He has inherited the Kingdom of Heaven.

What hinders us from receiving this Kingdom? We are hindered by the lack of this very spiritual poverty, the lack of awareness that we are the most sinful of all people. Although we might pronounce those words at times and say, “I am the worst of all people,” only one encounter with simply some unfavorable circumstances is enough to convince us that this is not so. It is very easy to test it. As soon as some one close to us says an unkind word to us, criticizes us, or points out some personal fault of ours, our soul immediately feels insulted and flares up with resentment. This is a clear sign that we do not have an

awareness of our sinfulness. And if we see that someone we know has been given more respect and attention than us, and this wounds us, then this is likewise testimony to the fact that we are far from spiritual poverty, that the spirit of pride reigns in us. And if we look with contempt and arrogance at our impoverished brothers who sit with outstretched hands or dig in the garbage bins, or consider those who do not go to church and are not of the Christian faith to be worse than ourselves and judge them, this also tells us that we do not have spiritual poverty.

Our Venerable Father Sergii of Radonezh has given us a great spiritual lesson by calling himself the “worst among people”, meaning worse than both those who worship God, and those who are indifferent to God and do not want to know the Creator and Savior of the world. He was like the Gospel publican who beat his breast with the words, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!”, and said the Jesus prayer all his life, with the awareness of his poverty, exclaiming, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner!” The saint learned through experience the spiritual law that it is not ascetic labors that open the way to salvation, but, first of all, humility and purity of spirit. They call down God’s mercy upon us.

And we see that the Lord had mercy on the saint for his spiritual poverty and gave him what he longed for all his life; He gave him the Kingdom of Heaven. And not only that. The Lord gave incorruption to his temporal body. And the Lord gave him the power of healing; even after his death, he gives healing through his body of all illnesses, of both soul and body, to whomever runs to him with faith and love for help. The Lord gave St. Sergii the glory of a luminary and wonderworker before the whole world, a protector and guardian angel of the Russian land!

So this is what it means to accept into our hearts the Lord’s words about spiritual poverty, what it means to strive to receive this poverty with all our strength. May St. Sergii’s image of spiritual poverty become a seed in our hearts and produce fruit, so that we might become poor in spirit and hear the words of Our Lord Jesus Christ: *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

VENERABLE BARSANUPIUS THE GREAT AND JOHN THE PROPHET: PART III

156. Blessed is he who has been purified of anger and the other passions, has kept all the commandments, and says: *I am a worthless servant* (Luke 17:10).

157. Brother! The Divine Scripture says: *Do everything with counsel, and without counsel do nothing* (Sirach 32:21). When you acted not according to counsel, but according to your own will, you labored foolishly; for there is no one who does not have need of someone to counsel him, except He Who created wisdom. But when you resolve to cut off your own will according to God, to enter into humility and accept the least of your brothers as an advisor, you thereby arouse to envy the enemy of good, the demon, who ever nourishes envy towards everyone. Do you see the stubbornness of the enemy? ... Be heedful and you will genuinely see that just as soon as you place a beginning the enemy immediately presents to you a good-seeming pretext and you will destroy what you have begun. Then again you make a beginning and again all the sooner destroy it. And you do not remember that *he that endureth to the end will be saved* (Mark 13:13), and *He Who hath begun a good work in you will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus* (Phil. 1:6). If you act not according to your own will, as you have acted up to now, it will be easy for you, and I do not grieve over this, for I do not want to be anyone’s abba or teacher, remembering the accusation of the apostle: *Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?* (Rom. 2:21). Brother! The work of those being saved is to make the soul as refined as a spider web. And so, one needs much patience until



through many sorrows we enter into the Kingdom of God (Acts 14:22) in Christ Jesus Our Lord...

160. Let us always accuse ourselves: for victory consists precisely in this. As for the resolve to go into the desert, as the fathers said, there are three conditions, which if anyone observes, he can live both among people and in the deserts, and wherever he might go, namely: to reproach oneself, to leave one's own will behind him, and to consider oneself lower than all creatures. And let it be known to your love that all the efforts of the devil are directed towards separating us from each other [...]

161. In all cases let us hasten to humility; for the humble one lies on the ground, and where can one fall who lies on the ground? But it is evident that one who is in a high place falls easily.

165. The Scripture says: *We had entered into fire and water, and Thou hast led us out into repose* (Ps. 65:12). Those who desire to please God must go through small sorrows. How it is that we glorify holy martyrs for the sufferings which they have endured for the sake of God, if we cannot ourselves endure even a little sickness? Tell your sorrowful soul: "Is not a fever better than Gehenna?" Know that they who want it easy in everything will hear one day: *Thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime* (Luke 16:25). Let us not weaken: we have the merciful God Who knows our infirmity better than we do. If He, for the sake of testing, allows a disease to come upon us, we have treatment from the apostle who says: *God is faithful; He will not suffer you to be tempted above your ability, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it* (I Cor. 10:13).

168. Who can depict, or who can search out the unutterable joy of the saints, their unspeakable rejoicing and incomparable light; how the Lord reveals to them here the manifestation of His wondrous and most glorious mysteries and the glory and repose prepared for them; how He removes their mind from the present world, and they ever see themselves in Heaven with Christ and His angels. Neither hunger, nor thirst, nor anything earthly causes them sorrows; for they have found freedom from the reproaches, passions, and sins of life, and in a word I shall say with the words of the Scripture: *Where their treasurer is, there is their heart also.*

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:

**Rob, Melinda and family
Reid, Amber, and Charles
Doc
Jackson**

**Jill
Ricardo
Christiano
Barbara**

**Peter and infant
Ivan
Michael**

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
Daniel Simpson — Health
Cheryl (Xenia) Light — 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.