

St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church

November 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

- **Righteous John of Kronstadt**
 - Tue., Oct. 31 Vigil 6 P.M.
 - Wed., Nov. 1 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **22nd Sunday after Pentecost**
 - **Apostle James, the Brother of the Lord**
 - Sat., Nov. 4 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., Nov. 5 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Great Martyr Demetrius of Thessalonica**
 - Tue., Nov. 7 Vigil 6 P.M.
 - Wed., Nov. 8 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **23rd Sunday after Pentecost**
 - Sat., Nov. 11 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., Nov. 12 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Great Martyr George the Trophy-bearer**
 - Wed., Nov. 15 Vespers and Matins 6 P.M.
 - Thur., Nov. 16 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **24th Sunday after Pentecost**
 - **Synaxis of Unmercenary Physicians and Wonderworkers**
 - Sat., Nov. 18 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., Nov. 19 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Archangel Michael and All the Bodiless Hosts**
 - Mon., Nov. 20 Vigil 6 P.M.
 - Tue., Nov. 21 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **25th Sunday after Pentecost**
 - **Holy Hierarch John Chrysostom**
 - Sat., Nov. 25 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., Nov. 26 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.

MAKER AND BAKER FAIR

The Sisterhood of St. Macrina will be preparing handmade crafts and baked goods for sale at St. Basil's the second weekend in December. Please mark your calendars to support the Sisterhood's efforts. Cash and credit cards will be accepted.

YOUTH GATHERING AT ST. BASIL'S

The second seasonal gathering of the St. Basil youth took place on Thursday, October 26th. The event invited all our young people to come together to share a meal, play games, and enjoy the fall weather. Another gathering is planned for January, after the conclusion of the Nativity fast.



Pictures of Youth Gathering



IS HERESY A GREATER OR A LESSER SIN THAN OTHER SINS? PRIEST GEORGE MAXIMOV

Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians goes through the list of sins which lead one to hell:

“Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, feuds, jealousy, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:19-21).

The Apostle included heresy in this list and, thereby, he destroys two false opinions.

The first is tolerance to this sin: “Of course, there is nothing good in it, but it is far better than murder or adultery; people’s faith can be a little bit different, and the Lord will undoubtedly save them, too.” The Apostle destroys this misunderstanding by saying that those who adhere to heresies “shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.”

Heresy is a false understanding of God or of His activity in the world. If we were to meet a person whom we have never seen, and if we had false ideas about his appearance, we are not going to recognize him and our meeting is not going to happen. In the same way, false ideas about God make our meeting Him impossible. Our God said: “I am the Truth” (John 4:6). This is why heresy, according to Abba Agathon, “alienates man from God,” for falsehood cannot unite us with truth. For this reason, the Holy Fathers fought so selflessly and uncompromisingly with the spread of heresies; thereby, they sought to preserve from peril those who believed a heresy, as well as those who could believe it in the future. In this activity, the Holy Fathers were propelled by love and desire for the salvation of those who had gone astray.

Another false opinion regarding heresy is opposite to the first one: it assigns heresy such gravity that it makes other sins almost insignificant. With this unbalanced view, one’s abhorrence of the sin of heresy can be used to minimize other sins: “yes, I sin in this and that, but, at least, I am not a heretic, and the Lord will save me just because of my Orthodoxy.” Apostle Paul, numbering heresy among other sins, destroys this false opinion, as well. It is good that you are not a heretic, but if you live in fornication, or drunkenness, or in enmity with your neighbor, you still will be found – together with heretics – outside the Kingdom of God.

So let us be watchful, lest we have part with Satan, either through distortion of faith or through sins of the flesh. In His Church the Lord has given us everything necessary for our victory over sin and for the defense from its onslaughts. He teaches us through the Holy Scripture and the writings of the Holy Fathers how to believe and how to withstand the attacks of passions; He cleanses us in the Mystery of Holy Confession and gives us strength to be changed in the Mystery of Holy Communion.



FOCUS ON FOCUS

Thank you for your faithful service on the early evening of October 8. The numbers have significantly risen in the last few months, so we will need to prepare roughly 100-125 meals to keep up with the demand. Our next meal will be served on **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.

Thank you as well for your faithful service in providing cereal, oatmeal, and shelf stable milk during the months of September and October. The FOCUS ministry was very appreciative of our donations.

For the month of November, we have been asked to supply the FOCUS Pantry with **peanut butter, jelly, saltines, and canned beef stew w/ poptops**. Please look for an email from Fr. Sergii with details about these items. A flier is posted in the trapeza with tear-away tabs for reminders. Please donate these items in the large plastic container in our parish coat closet. We would like to supply a healthy donation by **November 19**.

AN EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNT OF THE ROYAL MARTYR NICHOLAS II PRAYER IN CHURCH FROM *INCOMPREHENSIBLE RUSSIA. MEMOIRS.*

BY SAINT MARDARY (USKOKOVICH) (†1935), SERBIAN BISHOP OF AMERICA AND CANADA

I sometimes received an invitation to officiate at Tsarskoe Selo in [...] church where the court worshipped.

I was taking time over the proskomedia, [...] when I noticed the assisting deacon glancing nervously at his watch. In a moment, he walked over to the altar and said: "Please hurry a little, Father Mardary, about finishing the proskomedia. The Emperor and his family will be in church in about five minutes."

To which I replied that I should have expected the Emperor to arrive at the middle or even at the end of the Liturgy.

"Oh, no!" said the deacon. "He is quite likely to get here in time for the beginning of the Liturgy."

It happened just as he had predicted.

The congregation was all standing in their assigned places, courtiers, military and civil officers, gentlemen and ladies whose rank gave them access to the court.

I myself was standing calmly by the altar with the deacon to my right. My desire to see the Tsar as he came in, led me, however, to turn my head now and again towards the main entrance.

A slight commotion among the courtiers gave us our first warning of the approach of the Imperial family. Then we caught the sound of steps in the distance. The Emperor and Empress were coming up the stone stairs. They were followed by their august children.

As he entered, the Emperor acknowledged with a slight inclination of his head the bows of the quite considerable congregation that had gathered for the Liturgy. Then he took the place that was always reserved for him at the right hand side of the cathedral. Close to him, not by his side but a step behind and to the side stood the Empress. Their four daughters and their heir-tsarevich took places just behind them, but I noticed that the Emperor put his hand on the shoulder of the tsarevich and moved him to a place in front of himself and the Empress.

I was surprised at their early arrival, and I was also surprised to notice that from the moment of his entrance into the church until the end of the Liturgy lasting more than an hour, the Emperor stood absolutely motionless, except that he often traced with his hand the sign of the cross. Afterwards I



found that this was his customary attitude while in church.

[...] I had an opportunity to observe how complete his absorption in the Liturgy really was. Just behind him, a heavy object – I never knew just what – fell to the floor with a loud noise. Everybody in the church turned around to see what had happened, including the Empress herself and the august children. But not the Emperor. He stood just as he had been standing before, with his gaze directed as steadily as ever towards the altar.

Once, [...] at a service during the Lenten season, I had an opportunity to observe the Emperor receiving the Holy Mysteries after an extended fast. [...] I could see his reverent face distinctly [...]. And very few things in my life have had such a power to strengthen my [...] faith. I can compare its effect on me only with the emotions aroused in my soul by the extreme piety of the Optina Elders.

All through the service, the Tsar's face showed the strain of his preoccupation with his own thoughts, up to the moment, when exclaiming: "In the fear of God and faith draw nigh", the priest comes forth through the central doors of the iconostasis with the Holy Mysteries. At which point, the Russian Emperor, accompanied by his family, starts towards the priest while the others follow.

In a steady voice, with every word sounding distinctly, the Emperor repeated the communion prayer: "I believe, O Lord, and I confess ..." Then bowing profoundly low, making the sign of the cross several times and then crossing his arms on his breast, he received the Holy Communion with the utmost reverence. Then he crossed himself once more and kissed the holy vessel, and I noticed that, as he bowed once more and stepped back, a change had come over his face. The worried look had vanished and in its place had appeared the most joyous radiance.

Not only while I was still in Petrograd, but all through the years that I have spent in America, that radiant image of the Russian Emperor as a sincere and uplifted believer kept coming back to me as I saw him at that Lenten service in Tsarskoe Selo.

MEETING THE NEWLY ILLUMINED

Below, we include an interview with newly illumined Michael Damke who was baptized in August.

Where did you grow up?

I was born in St. Louis and grew up here. I've lived here most of my life.

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

I heard about Orthodoxy online, initially. I was listening to different influencers before I started reading the Gospel, Scripture and the works of some of the Church Fathers which began to draw me into the faith.

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

The singing of the Trisagion Hymn by the choir during my first Liturgy made a memorable impression. Another memorable experience is when Fr. Sergii, Fr. Thomas, and the choir sang the Magnification at Vigil. I remember being moved to tears on these occasions.

Who is your patron saint and why did you choose him?

My patron saint is St. Michael the Archangel. He is the intercessor for my prayers to give me the courage to strive to live a life in God's likeness.

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

My favorite thing about being Orthodox so far is participating in the Sacraments.

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

What I look forward to the most as an Orthodox Christian is, plainly, the resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come.



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

As far as favorite feasts or liturgical services go, Pascha has left the biggest impact. I am also grateful to be able to attend the evening Vigils. It is a great privilege when I can end my week by confessing to my spiritual fathers and commune the following morning. Being in the temple in the evening also seems to invoke an additional element of solemnity.

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

Please pray for me and forgive me and have patience while I develop a better understanding of the liturgical processes, church life and what it means to be an Orthodox Christian. Lord, have mercy.

VENERABLE BARSANUPIUS THE GREAT AND JOHN THE PROPHET: PART VI

244. Question: I suffer from my passions of soul: Tell me, for the Lord's sake, what I should do to be delivered from them.

Answer: Brother! He who desires to be saved and to become a son of God must acquire great humility, obedience, submission and meekness. Behold: you asked what you should do. I told you and I vouch for it, that neither the enemy nor passion will take possession of you. For they are consumed by humility as by fire, and the heart finds repose, being enlightened in Christ, to Whom there may be glory. Amen.

252. Question: I am being strongly attacked by sexual passion; I am afraid that I may fall into despondency and, from the infirmity of the body, will not be able to restrain myself. Pray for me, for the Lord's sake, and tell me, my Father. What should I do?

Answer: Brother! The devil, out of envy, has raised up warfare against you. Guard your eyes and do not eat to satiety. Take a little wine for the sake of the body's infirmity of which you speak. Acquire humility, which rends all the nets of the enemy. And I, who am nothing, will do what I can, entreating God that He might deliver you from every temptation and preserve you from every evil. Do not yield to the enemy, O brother, and do not give yourself to the despondency, for this is a great joy to the enemy. Pray without ceasing, saying: "Lord Jesus Christ, deliver me from shameful passions," and God will have mercy on you, and you will receive strength by the prayers of the saints. Amen.

253. The same brother, being attacked by the same sexual passions, asked the Great Elder to pray for him and to tell him how to distinguish whether a man is tempted by his own lusts or by the enemy.

Answer: Brother, without labor and contrition of heart no one can be delivered from the passions and please God. When a man is tempted by his own lust, this may be known from the fact that he is careless about himself and allows his heart to reflect about what he has done before. In this case the man himself draws the passion unto himself through his own lust. His mind, being little by little blinded by the passion, begins, unnoticeably for himself, to pay attention to someone for whom he feels attraction, or to speak with the person, and he finds occasions on which to converse with him or sit with him, and, by all means, he strives to fulfill his desire. If one allows this, the warfare will increase until he falls, albeit not in body but in spirit – it turns out that such a man himself lights the fire in his own substance. But a prudent and sober man who desires to be saved, when he sees from what it is that he suffers harm, carefully preserves himself from evil remembrances, is not drawn into passionate thoughts, avoids meetings and conversations with those for whom he feels attraction and avoids every occasion for sin, fearing, lest he himself ignite a fire within himself. This is the warfare which proceeds from one's own lust which a man brings on himself...

Tame your steed with the bridle of knowledge, lest, looking here and there, he becomes inflamed with lust toward women and men and throws you, the horseman, to the ground. Pray to God that He may turn *your eyes, lest they see vanity* (Ps. 118:37). And when you acquire a manful heart, warfare will depart from you. Cleanse yourself, as wine cleanses wounds, and do not allow stench and filthiness to accumulate in you. Acquire weeping, so that it might remove from you freedom [looseness] in your relation, which destroys the souls which adopt it. Do not throw away the

implement without which fertile land cannot be worked. This implement, made by the Great God, is humility; it uproots all the tares from the field of the Master and gives grace to those who dwell in it. Humility does not fall but raises those who possess it. Love weeping with all your heart, for it also is a participant in this good work. Labor in everything to cut off your own will, for this is accounted to a man for sacrifice. This is what is meant by: *For Thee we are murdered all day long, we are counted as sheep for slaughter* (Ps. 43:22). Do not weaken yourself by conversations, for they will not allow you to prosper in God. Firmly bridle the organs of your senses: sight, hearing, smelling, taste and feeling, and you will prosper by the grace of Christ. Without tortures no one is a martyr, as the Lord also has said: *In your patience possess ye your souls* (Luke 21:19), and the Apostle says: *In much endurance, in sorrows* (II Cor. 6:4).

To be continued

BAPTISMS AT ST. BASIL'S

Newly illumined Jill Bradley was baptized into the Orthodox Church on Saturday, October 21st, by Fr. Sergii (pictured to the left). Jill has been learning about the Orthodox Faith and preparing for Holy Illumination through parishioner Joseph Steineger's catechumen class. May God grant the newly illumined, Jill, many years!

NEW CATECHUMENS AT ST. BASIL'S

Fr. Sergii read the prayers for the making of a catechumen over Gage Harris (left), Gabrielle

Groves (center), and Shannon Callanan (right). All three (pictured to the right) have been attending catechumen classes given by Fr. Thomas and Fr. Dcn. Ephraim where they will continue to learn about the Orthodox Faith. Please keep them in your prayers that our Lord may continue to guide them in their Orthodox journey.



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:

Doc
Ricardo
Christiano

Ivan
Chad
Ryan

Gage
Gabrielle
Shannon

CATECHUMEN CORNER

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Archimandrite Seraphim — Health
Archpriest Moses Berry — Health
Reader Symeon Campbell — Health
Photini Mills — Health
Tatiana Zyryanova — Health
Julianna Campbell — Health
Dimitry Johnson — Health

Inna Dagaeva — Health
Mark Wiebenga — Health
Daniel Simpson — Health
Cheryl (Xenia) Light — Health
Archpriest Martin Swanson — Repose
Katherine Swanson — Repose
Gloria Pappas — Repose

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.