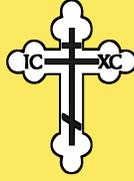


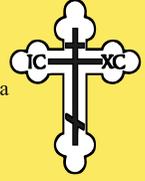


St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church

205 Highland Avenue
Des Peres, MO 63122



A parish of the Diocese of Chicago and Mid-America
Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia



V. Rev. Fr. Martin Swanson, Pastor
Fr. Sergii Alekseev, Associate Pastor
V. Rev. Fr. Radomir Chkautovich, Attached

May 2018

Homily on the Feast of the Ascension of the Lord

by Holy Hierach Innocent (Borisov)

And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy (Lk. 24:50–52). Thus ended our Lord and Savior’s time of earthly labor! He suffered much, and was greatly glorified. There have never been such sorrows as His sorrows, and there has never been such glory as His glory. He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:8-11).

Shall we ever behold this glory of our Lord? We shall behold it, for in His last, great prayer, the Lord prayed about this to His Father: I will, He prayed, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me (Jn. 17:24). The angels appeared to the Apostles after the Lord’s Ascension, witnessing that the Lord will come to all of us on the last day in the same appearance as the Apostles beheld Him ascending into Heaven (cf. Act. 1:2). We shall even participate in the glory of the Ascended Lord, if only we do not make ourselves unworthy, for He ascended into Heaven in order to prepare it to receive all His true followers. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive

you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (Jn. 14:2–3). The Apostle Paul testifies that this merciful accommodation on our behalf has not changed at all even after the Ascension, when he says that on the last Day of the Lord’s Coming, the faithful shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:17). This means something will happen to the faithful which is similar even in appearance to what happened to the Lord Himself on the Mount of Olives.

One path, brothers, by which we, too, can attain the heights of holy glory, is the same path by which our Lord ascended in glory; that is, the way of the cross, the way of purification, self-denial, the way of exterior and interior sufferings. Will we remember this? And in remembering it, will we travel Christ’s path to Heaven?

If the Mount Tabor of earthly happiness uplifts you, brothers, over everything earthly, and brings you closer to Heaven, then remain upon it! The ascended Lord blesses your heights. Only take care not to fall into slumber on that Mount Tabor; and when Moses and Elias speak of the cross on which you must crucify your “old man,” don’t start muttering about building not one, but three tabernacles for that man. Remember, that the way to Heaven is not from Tabor, but from Olivet; and to get to Olivet you have to go through Gethsemane and Golgotha.

The Lord’s path should be the path of each and every one of us. The Lord suffered for all of us equally; the Heavens are opened also to all of us equally. Thus, I ask each and every one of you: can we point to very many things in our lives and say that they were done, or not done, by us because we are pre-destined for Heaven; because some day (cont’d page 6)

Special Services & Events for May

5/1 Tues. 6:00 p.m. Vigil Service Mid-Pentecost and St. Matrona
5/2 Wed. 8:00 a.m. D. Liturgy for Mid-Pentecost and St. Matrona
5/2 Wed. 3:00 p.m. Fr. Martin’s Office Hours—Hall
5/2 Wed. 6:30 p.m. Choir Practice—Hall
5/9 Wed. 3:00 p.m. Fr. Martin’s Office Hours—Hall
5/9 Wed. 6:30 p.m. Choir Practice—Hall
5/16 Wed. 3:00 p.m. Fr. Martin’s Office Hours—Hall
5/16 Wed. 6:00 p.m. Vigil Service for the Ascension of Our Lord
After Vigil, presentation by sisters of the Convent of St. Elizabeth

5/17 Thurs. 8:00 a.m. D. Liturgy for the Ascension of Our Lord
5/21 Mon. 6:00 p.m. Vigil Service for the translation of the relics of St. Nicholas
5/22 Tues. 8:00 a.m. D. Liturgy for the translation of the relics of St. Nicholas
5/23 Wed. 3:00 p.m. Fr. Martin’s Office Hours—Hall
5/23 Wed. 6:30 p.m. Choir Practice—Hall
5/26 Sat. 4:00 Memorial Saturday—Pannyhida
5/27 Sun. Following D. Liturgy, Kneeling Vespers
5/28 Mon. Holy Spirit Day 8:00 a.m. D. Liturgy served by Fr. Radomir
5/30 Wed. 3:00 Fr. Martin’s Office Hours—Hall
5/31 Wed. 6:30 Choir Practice—Hall

St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church St. Louis, MO

Parish News

PLEASE NOTE!

It is proper that you remain quiet and refrain from moving about the church from the time following the Gospel until Holy Communion. This is a time of great solemnity when people are trying to concentrate on the most sacred part of the Divine Liturgy. Moving about even to attend to the candle stands can be quite distracting during this time. (If the candle require attention during this time please leave them to the people appointed to such work)

Sisters from Belorussia to Visit St. Basil's

St. Basil's will be blessed by a visit from sisters of the Convent of St. Elisabeth in Minsk, Belorussia on May 16th, the eve of the Feast of the Ascension of our Lord. The sisters will attend the vigil service with us. Afterward there will be a lite snack in the Hall and the nuns will provide a presentation about their work with the poor and needy. They will also bring examples of their handicrafts which we will be able to purchase to benefit the work of the Convent.

Please do your best to attend the vigil service and to support this very worthwhile charity.

The Convent was founded in honor of the Holy Martyr Grand Duchess Elisabeth and was established in Minsk in 1994. It began when some parishioners re-opened the Ss' Peter and Paul Cathedral which had been destroyed and desecrated by the Communists. Several meetings were organized with the people in the vicinity of the Cathedral to come up with ways that the church could be of assistance to the community. These meetings were the roots from which the Sisterhood later grew.

Inspired by the example of their heavenly patroness and with the blessing of diocesan authorities, the sisters want to carry the commandments of the Lord to the places where love and care were in especially high demand - hospitals and residential facilities for children and adults. Today there are over three hundred sisters in the Sisterhood.

What Do The Sisters Do? Among the people who the sisters care for are patients of several hospitals in Minsk, including boarding homes for children and adults with special needs. They also visit people who are to a certain extent isolated from the society, having conversations with them, supporting them spiritually and emotionally – these are the tasks that the sisters try to accomplish. The sisters share their testimonies, talk with the patients about their problems and needs, read aloud spiritual books, and help the patients to prepare for Confession and Communion.

Aside from hospitals, and rehabilitation centers the sisters also carry out their obedience's in church shops located all around

Minsk. In addition to other duties, they do their best to answer their customers' questions, tell them about church life, comfort and inspire them. For the sisters, their obedience has become their life. One has to have a source of strength to be able to bring love and care to other people. Even the slightest transformation and even the tiniest step towards the Light is made possible thanks to communion, confession, and prayer. Prayer marks the beginning and the end of each day in the Convent. Prayer is regarded to be one of the most difficult tasks. However, the sisters are not afraid of work of any kind. Divine Liturgies are celebrated frequently in hospitals and rehabilitation Center's where the sisters serve. The residents of the Center also read akathists to various saints (St Mary of Egypt, the Inexhaustible Chalice icon of the Mother of God, St Matrona of Moscow, St Nicholas the Wonderworker, St Panteleimon, Ss Cyril and Mary the Parents of St Sergius of Radonezh) every day.

The sisters say that the most important thing in the spiritual life of the people is to realize that they can no longer live without the Church. Communion is not a magic pill, which you take and go on with your usual daily routine. Communion, prayer, and labor must become the foundation and way of life. This is when people experience a revival. This same kind of spiritual zeal permeates all of the obedience's carried out by the convent and bares remarkably abundant spiritual fruit. Plan to attend the presentation at approximately 8:00 p.m. on May16.

St. Macrina Sisterhood to Sponsor Fall Event

The St. Macrina Sisterhood will sponsor a mega-yard sale on Saturday, September 30th. According to Heather Bailey, chairman of the event, the sale will be held on the church parking lot and should attract large crowds because of its visibility and accessibility to major highways. Bailey said that it not too early to begin collecting items to be donated for the sale, and for planning to help out. This event will be a major fund-raiser for the Sisterhood and promises to provide a significant financial contribution to the parish. Its success however depends on your participation. More information can be found posted on the bulletin board in the parish hall.

Theotokos Garden Needs Your Help

A garden dedicated to the Mother of God has been planted in the circle drive in front of the church. The garden is beginning to bloom with spring flowers and is making a significant contribution to the exterior beautification of the church. Work will soon begin on the planting of summer flowers, and the garden committee is seeking volunteers to assist with providing flowers, mulching and planting.

Exact information can be found on a flyer available at the

St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church St. Louis, MO

More Parish News

church. You are reminded not to bring plantings or to work in the garden without first consulting with the garden committee as the layout of the garden has been carefully planned. We want to thank the committee consisting of Theodore and Photini Mills and Opal Morris for their dedicated work in seeing that this important project blossomed!

Phase 1 of the Holy Theotokos Garden Completed

St. Basil's Flower Committee has completed phase I of the garden in honor of the Holy Theotokos. We now have over 500 bulbs in the oval area. We also built a small rock perimeter to protect the flower beds and sprinkler system from cars running over that area.

Phase II begins on May 13 – Mothers Day

If you would like to participate, please bring to church some of the deer resistant flowers from the list below. You can buy them or bring some from your garden at home. We will need some volunteers to plant them on Sunday May 13 and Monday May 14.

Perennial List:	Annual List :	Herbs List
Bleeding Heart	Lantana	Sage
Yarrow	Allysum	Basil
Silver mound	Bachelor Buttons	Rosemary
Verbena	Zinnias	Thyme
Canterberry Bells	Snap dragons	Lavendar
Columbine		
Cardinal Flower		
Coreopsis		
Blazing Star		
purple coneflower		

Please remind the children to not run in the oval area. Also please do not do any weeding in this area, since some of these flowers will be planted by seeds

Parish Prayer List

Reader Gennady Barabtarlo (Health)
Boris Artemov (Health)
Hiermonk Seraphim (Health)
Andrew Johnstone (Recovery from Surgery)
Matthew Hoefler Family (Thanksgiving for return to the Church)

Keep our parishioners, and those who ask us to pray for them in your prayers this month. Contact Fr. Martin 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 don't notify clergy of patients, even if you list yourself as a parish member.

Contact Your Priest if You are Ill or Hospitalized

Contact Fr. Martin 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 don't notify clergy of patients, even if you list yourself as a parish member.

USE eSCRIP

It costs \$0 and benefits the parish. Get Cards at the candle counter. Sign up for the AMAZON rebate program to have a portion of you Amazon purchase donated by them to the parish. Please find sign up instructions next to the stair case in the hall.

SERVERS WANTED!

Boys may begin to serve in the altar at St. Basil's from the time they begin to go to Confession (usually about 9 years old). We encourage all our boys to serve in the altar! For more information please contact Michael Orlando.

St. Basil's Parish Facebook Page:

www.facebook.com/StBasiltheGreatSTLMO

For daily edification and updates of interest, like our Facebook Fanpage! Parishioner Ron Wall brings the best of Orthodoxy to us there everyday! "Like" us to appear in your FB Newsfeed



St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church St. Louis, MO

Scenes from Holy Week and Pascha



Top - left to right: Holy Friday procession and Holy Fire

Center - left to right - Pascha procession

Bottom - panorama of St basil interior at Pascha



St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church St. Louis, MO

Scenes from Holy Week and Pascha



Top - left to right: Fr. Sergii and Fr Deacon Ephraim -
Iconostasis doors open for Pascha

Bottom - left: Agape service (readers Fr. Deacon Ephraim,
Reader Gennedy Bararbtarlo, Subdeacon Thomas Nichols

Bottom - right: St. Basil Pascha banquet



Please Support Your Parish - Our Witness of Christ to the World!

Mortgage payments, utility bills, maintenance expenses, insurance premiums, and the list goes on and on! Imagine what it would be like if you didn't have an income to pay your bills?

The Church faces the same kind of expenses each month and relies on your donations to provide the income it needs to survive. Our church cannot rely on candle and prosphora sales alone to pay its bills, it must depend on regular contributions from its members to stay financially healthy. We are all

members of the church and we all share in the responsibility to pay its expenses if we wish to continue to have a place to worship. Don't depend on other parishioners to bear your burden! We ask that everyone regularly contribute to the Church whether that be on a weekly, monthly or quarterly basis. Give what you can on a regular and consistent basis, but give even if it is only \$5.00 or \$10.00 a week. We are all members of the Body of Christ and we are all responsible to maintain the church which houses us.

STEWARDSHIP IS ALL OF OUR RESPONSIBILITY!

St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church St. Louis, MO

The Holy Spirit is Sent

(cont'd from page 1) we should be with our Lord in Heaven? Have we abstained at least once from sin, have we done even one good deed with the thought that the Lord sees us from the Heavens? However small this question may seem, there could scarcely be found amongst us people who answer it in the affirmative. What is the meaning of our faith in the Ascended Lord? Do we believe in Him, or not? If we believe in Him, then where are our works? If we do not believe in Him, then why do we bear His Name? Whoever truly believes in his heavenly calling cannot be earthly: if he has this conviction it will of necessity be the source which inspires all his thoughts and feelings, his whole life, and all his relationships. In all the circumstances of his life, and in every situation, the true Christian remembers that he is an heir to Heaven, the co-inheritor of Christ, and he acts in accordance with his calling. In looking at his life, any such person can see that he does not live so much for the present and temporal as for the future and eternal; that his heart is somewhere far away, not in this world, and that his life is hidden in the heights, in God. This is how Christians once seemed to the pagans.

But is there very much of this in us, brothers? Is there at least something unearthly, Heavenly, and Christ-like in us? If there is, then we are like the Apostles, and can return to our own homes from the Mount of Olives with joy. The blessing of the ascended Lord belongs to us in this case, just as does the promise of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit descends, it will not pass by those who belong to Christ.

On How the Holy Spirit is Sent

by St. Gregory Palamas ca. 1296-1359

A short while ago, with the strong eyes of faith, we beheld Christ ascending, no less clearly than those accounted worthy to be His eye-witnesses. Nor are we less favored than they. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed", says the Lord (Jn. 20:29), referring to those who've found assurance through hearing, and see by faith. Recently we saw Christ lifted up from the ground bodily (Acts 1:9). Now, through the Holy Spirit sent by Him to His disciples, we see how far Christ ascended and to what dignity He carried up the nature He assumed from us. Clearly He went up as high as the place from which the Spirit sent by Him descended. He Who spoke through the prophet Joel showed us whence the Spirit comes, saying "I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh" (Joel 2:28), and to Him David addressed the words, "Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit; they are created: and Thou renewest the face of the earth" (Ps. 104:30). It follows that at His ascension Christ went up to the Father on high, as far as His Fatherly bosom, from which comes the Spirit. Having been shown, even in His human form, to share the Father's glory, Christ

Otherwise, the angels' reproach against the Apostles at the Lord's Ascension applies to us with even greater force. I say, with greater force, for to them was said, Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? (Acts 1:11) only because they, out of their love and zeal, gazed for long time at the heavens which received their Lord and Teacher. Something else needs to be said to us: Sons of men, why stand ye gazing not at heaven, but at the earth? Turn your eyes to Heaven, and behold our Savior, who has long been looking at you. Enter upon the path to Heaven which long lay before you; cast off the crushing weight of sin that you may travel it lightly, receive the cross into your hands and go to your Savior while He blesses you for this path, before the doors of Heaven close. Meanwhile the Angels, both Heavenly and earthly, invite you to the habitations of the Heavenly Father.

We hear your voice, ye blessed dwellers of Heaven, and want to step upon the path of the Lord; only strengthen us and accompany us with your help. Ever more so—Thou Thyself, O Merciful Savior and Lord, do not abandon us who are orphans in spirit and infirm. Look down from the Heavens upon our good intentions and upon our infirmity, watch over us and bless us for Thy path; clothe us with power from on high, and make firm our wavering steps, until we come to Thy holy mountain, and unite with Thee. Amen. (from www.orthochristian.com)

now sent forth the Spirit Who comes from the Father and is sent by Him from Heaven. But when we hear that the Spirit was sent by the Father and the Son, this does not mean that the Spirit has no part in Their greatness, for He is not just sent, but also Himself sends and consents to be sent.

This is clearly shown by Christ's words spoken through the prophet, "Mine hand hath laid the foundation of the earth and stretched out the heavens, and now the Lord God, and His Spirit, hath sent Me" (cf. Isa. 48:13-16). Again, speaking through the same prophet He says, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek" (Isa. 61:1). The Holy Spirit is not just sent, but Himself sends the Son, Who is sent by the Father. He is therefore shown to be the same as the Father and the Son in nature, power, operation and honor. (Homily 24, 1-2)

