

ARCHPRIEST MARTIN SWANSON, PASTOR  
PRIEST SERGII ALEKSEEV, ASSOCIATE PASTOR  
ARCHPRIEST RADOMIR CHKAUTOVICH, ATTACHED

A PARISH OF THE DIOCESE OF CHICAGO AND MID-AMERICA  
RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA

## December 2019

### On The Entry Into The Holy of Holies I

Excerpt from *Mary the Mother of God Sermons by Saint Gregory Palamas*

If a tree is known by its fruit, and a good tree brings forth good fruit (Matt. 7:17, Luke 6:43-44), how could she who is the Mother of Goodness, who gave birth to that Beauty which has no beginning, not be incomparably more excellent and beautiful than anything good on earth and in heaven?

When the time came for God's choice to reach its culmination, Joachim and Anna, of the house and lineage of David, were picked out by Him. They were childless, but lived chastely together and were more virtuous than all those who traced back their noble descent and character to David. With asceticism and prayer they begged God to deliver them from childlessness, and promised to dedicate to Him from infancy the child to be born to them.

Since they had obtained that for which they had prayed, and knew that divine promise to them had been fulfilled, they in turn kept their promise to God. Being truthful people, dear to God and God-loving, they hastened, as soon as she was weaned, to bring the most holy Virgin, God's child and now the Mother of God, to His Temple, to the Chief Priest there. Even at that tender age, being full of divine grace and not wanting in the perfection of her mental faculties, she understood, more than anyone else did at the time, what was happening to her. She showed as best she could that, rather than being led, she was coming to God by herself and of her own volition, as though it were natural for her to fly towards holy and divine love, and to consider entering the Holy of Holies and dwelling there as something desirable which she knew was fitting for her.

When God's High Priest understood that the Maid apparently possessed divine grace above all others, he had to count her worthy of something more excellent than anyone else deserved. He led her into the Holy of Holies and then persuaded everyone to be content with what had happened. At the same time, God was also helping, showing His approval and sending heavenly nourishment defying description to the Virgin in that place, by the



### Special Services & Events

- Tues. Dec. 3 6:00 p.m.  
Vigil for the Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple
- Wed. Dec. 4 8:00 a.m.  
Divine Liturgy for the Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple
- Fri. Dec. 6 6:00 p.m.  
Vigil for Great Martyr Katherine
- Sat. Dec. 7 9:00 a.m.  
Divine Liturgy for Great Martyr Katherine
- Mon. Dec. 9 6:00 p.m.  
Vigil for the Kursk Root Icon
- Tues. Dec. 10 8:00 a.m.  
Divine Liturgy for the Kursk Root Icon
- Wed. Dec. 18 6:00 p.m.  
Vigil for St. Nicholas
- Thur. Dec. 19 8:00 a.m.  
Divine Liturgy for St. Nicholas

### Weekly Services:

Saturday - Vigil 5:00 p.m.  
Sunday - Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

# Parish News

## Choir Voices Needed

All parishioners are welcome to join the choir, all voices are needed. Choir practice is held every Wednesday evening in the church at 6:30.

If you are interested in church music and the choir but are unsure of your abilities, you are invited to join Marushka Royse for sessions to learn about singing, voice, reading the music and choir participation in general. These sessions are held every Wednesday at 6pm before choir practice. Come and see what it is all about. You can come to the 6pm session and stay for choir practice. If you have any questions, please contact Marushka.

## Weekly Tours of St. Basil's

Tours of St. Basil's church are conducted by one of the parish clergy every Wednesday between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m., and are designed to acquaint the community with the church, its architecture, traditional design, iconography, and history. No appointments are necessary and the tours will accommodate both individuals and groups. Advance notice would be appreciated for groups over five. For additional information or to schedule a group tour contact Fr. Martin at 314-835-1569.

## Parish Prayer List

Archpriest Andrei Popkov—Recovery  
Gloria Pappas—Recovery  
Brigid Hammer—Recovery  
Nadia Danett—Health  
Albert Salsich—Health

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 do not notify clergy of patients, even if you list yourself as a parish member.

## "Ask Your Priest" Column

This new column will answer questions submitted by you [the parishioners] concerning Orthodoxy.

Questions will be submitted to priests anonymously. Submit your questions to [StBasilSTLNewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:StBasilSTLNewsletter@gmail.com)

## Gardening Help

Parishioner, John Malcolm, welcomes any who are willing to help gardening on the church grounds. John Malcolm will be working at the parish Wednesdays and Saturdays from 9am to noon weather permitting. Tools, gloves, and water will be provided for all who come to help.

## Use eScrip and Amazon Smile Rebates

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 your Amazon purchase donated by Amazon to the parish. Please find sign up instructions next to the staircase 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 nine years old). We encourage all of our boys to serve in the altar! For more information please contact Michael Orlando.

## St. Basil's Parish Facebook Page:

Check out <https://www.facebook.com/SaintBasiltheGreatSTLMO/> for daily edification and interesting updates. Like our Facebook Fanpage to have us appear in your Facebook Newsfeed.

## November Icon Answer



Sts. Cyril and  
Methodius next  
to the Church  
Entrance

hand of an angel. This food strengthened her physically, and she was sustained and perfected in body with more purity and excellence than the bodiless angels, having heavenly beings to minister to her. She was not simply brought once into the Holy of Holies but was, as it were, taken into God's company for a period of several years, so that though her, when the time came, the heavenly mansions might be opened and be given as everlasting dwelling to those who believe in her mysterious childbearing.

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### St. Macrina Sisterhood Update

The success of the parish festival has prompted the sisterhood of St. Basil's to bolster its membership and seek out new ways to serve the parish. The sisterhood is dedicated to St. Macrina, the older sister of Sainted Hierarchs Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa, and follows in monastic Macrina's example of working diligently and prayerfully for the Church and for the glory of God. Some of the objectives of the sisterhood include visiting the sick, helping the church school, performing deeds of charity, fund raising, and helping those in need. The sisterhood had a preliminary meeting one Sunday following trapeza. New members of the sisterhood were eager to find an appropriate and useful project for the church. Many topics were discussed and although the sisterhood will need to reconvene to determine which course of action to take, the parish can expect the sisterhood to choose a project that, with the blessing of the priests, will benefit the parish.

All women who are members of the parish and older than eighteen are welcome to join the sisterhood. Matushka Svetlana is the President of the sisterhood and although it has some leadership positions filled, the sisterhood is always looking for women with leadership skills to help execute its mission. Any women who are interested in joining should contact Daniela Waller at [danielia.waller@gmail.com](mailto:danielia.waller@gmail.com)

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### January Celebrations

January will soon be arriving and there are many feasts to celebrate in this busy yet special month. Below are the biggest celebrations in January

and we hope friends and family will be able to join us here in St. Louis for our festivities.

Nativity Vigil will be celebrated on Monday evening (Jan. 6th) and then Divine Liturgy on Tuesday morning -January 7th, 2020. Following the Divine Liturgy for this Great Feast of the Lord, there will be a luncheon in the church hall. There will also be a special presentation from the Sunday School students on Saturday, Jan. 11th. Students have been practicing diligently and are eager to display their program to the parish on this feast. Everyone is invited to celebrate the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

St. Basil's will also celebrate its feast day on Tuesday January 14th, 2020 with Divine Liturgy. As usual, Vigil will be served the night before. Both festal services will be celebrated with any visiting priests and/or hierarchs in attendance. A luncheon will be prepared following the Divine Liturgy where all are welcome to partake. Please make any necessary preparations to join St. Basil's in January on this day.

Lastly, Theophany will be celebrated on Sunday, January 19th with Vigil the night before.

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### Ask Your Priest

**Q:** Why isn't the name Lucifer used as a proper name for the Devil?

**A:** *Lucifer means "light-bearing" and points to the exalted qualities which Satan, who was an angel, had before he fell away from the Source of light -- God. However, the word itself is not a proper name and can and is sometimes used in reference to other entities. In the western tradition, Lucifer became a proper name for the enemy of our salvation and was popularized in Renaissance literature.*

*Angels' names reveal to us their qualities or ministries. The light-bearing quality of angels is referred to by Holy Prophet Isaiah and we find the origin for the word Lucifer in his Book. Our Lord speaks about the disfigured state of the fallen angel when He says that He saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning (Luke 10:18). In the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament we find other*

descriptions of the enemy, but not "lucifer".

Therefore, we can say that Lucifer, as a proper name for the enemy, is prevalent in the western humanistic tradition, but not in the tradition of historical Christianity.

### Deacons and Their Sacred Vestments From *The Law of God*

Deacons form the third rank of the sacred ministry; in Greek "deacon" means a "server". Deacons assist a bishop or priest during the serving of the Divine Liturgy or other Mysteries and services, but they may not serve alone. The participation of a deacon in the divine services is not obligatory, and therefore many churches conduct services without them.



Some deacons, particularly in cathedral churches, are deemed worthy of the title of protodeacon. Monks who have received the rank of deacon are called hierodeacons, and the senior of them is called an archdeacon.

The vestments [special and sacred robes] of the diaconate are the sticharion, the orarion, and the cuffs. [As seen to the left, clergy remove any jewelry or watches prior to serving and as part of vesting or putting on vestments]

The sticharion is a long garment, open down the length of the sides for a deacon, but entirely unslitted for servers, in the form of a cross with an opening for one's head and with wide sleeves. The deacon's sticharion may also be worn by subdeacons. The right to wear a sticharion may also be granted to readers and servers. The sticharion signifies purity of soul, necessary for a person of ecclesiastical rank.



The orarion is a long, wide band of the same

material as the sticharion with fringe on the ends. It is worn over the left shoulder on top of the sticharion. For simple deacons it is worn [draped over the shoulder], for protodeacons it is wound once around the body. The orarion signifies the



Grace of God which the deacon received in the Mystery of Ordination.

The cuffs [also worn by priests and as mentioned before] are of the same material of the sticharion, and are worn around the wrists and laced with cords. They are a reminder that he celebrates the

Mysteries not by his own power, but by the power and Grace of God. They are also a reminder of the Savior's bonds during His passion.

### Twelve Days of Russia By Archpriest Martin

Opportunities to visit Russia have come and gone for me over the past 25 years, and always for some reason the opportunity has vanished. I began to think that God didn't want me to go to Russia, when in June of 2019 I got a call from Fr. Gregory Joyce, the current Dean of the Diocesan Seminary, inviting me to accompany him to St. Petersburg to attend the decennial meeting of the St. John of Kronstadt Family which is an organization dedicating to carrying on the charitable work of St. John. Because the Diocesan Seminary is under the patronage of St. John of Kronstadt it was one of more than 100 organizations from around the world being invited to participate. As the first dean and founder of the seminary I was delighted to accept, however I couldn't help but believe that at the last minute the trip would be cancelled—this



time it was not, and on October 28th I found myself boarding a plane for St. Petersburg. I met Fr. Gregory in Detroit and in just 12 hours I was stepping onto Russian soil. We were picked up at the airport and taken to the meeting headquarters hotel. The next morning came one of the highlights of the trips, a visit to Karpovka convent founded by St. John and a chance to venerate and to serve a moleben before his Holy Relics.



We next visited the St. Petersburg Theological Academy which had been largely destroyed during the communist era, but which has been beautifully rebuilt and

now serves over three hundred students. After a tour of the facility we attended Vigil and the following morning were picked up and taken to the naval base at Kronstadt where I served with over 300 priests and a host of Hierarchs at the Naval Cathedral which is one of the largest churches in the world holding over 5000 people.

St. John served here at the St. Andrew's Cathedral destroyed by the communists. After Divine Liturgy we toured St. John's home and were then treated to a sumptuous meal. The rest of the week was filled with workshops and sessions about the wonderful charitable work being carried out by "The St. John's Family Organization".



On Sunday afternoon, we were whisked off to the train station where we boarded the "Bullet" for Moscow. We made the 500-mile trip in just over 4 hours. In Moscow, we were met by Archbishop Peter who had arrived from Chicago earlier that day and greeted by our host Bishop Anthony rector of the Serbian Prodvorije (representative church and inn) where we stayed during our time in Moscow. Bishop Anthony and his staff could not have been kinder, providing lodging, meals and transportation and opening many doors to



Holy Places that would have been otherwise inaccessible. The next morning, we served at the representative church of St. Peter and Paul as it was the feast of the Kazan Icon. The following day was filled with visits to educational departments of the Moscow Patriarchate for the

purpose of arranging affiliations between our Diocesan Seminary and those in Russia. We were received with great respect and were able to make significant progress in developing educational relationships for our School. By far the highlight of the day was visiting and venerating the Holy Relics of St. Matrona of Moscow at her shrine. The next day was the Feast of the Joy of All Who Sorrow Icon and we were invited to serve with Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev (the head of the Department of External Affairs of the Moscow Patriarchate) at his parish which was celebrating its Patronal Feast. Again, we were privileged to serve with many clergy and hierarchs followed by a great meal where I had the opportunity to personally meet Metropolitan Hilarion.



On Thursday we rose early and went to Sergiev Posad where we visited the Monastery founded by St. Sergius himself and venerated his Holy Relics along with those of many other saints associated with the Monastery over the centuries. After lunch at a quaint restaurant in the town associated with the Monastery we returned to Moscow where we visited the huge new church (over 180 ft. tall) dedicated to the New Martyrs and Confessors of the Russian Church built by Metropolitan Tikhon on the grounds of the Sretensky Monastery. Although Metropolitan Tikhon's book *Everyday Saints* is one of my favorites, his Church is not, as it is too contemporary for my taste.

The following day we served Divine Liturgy at the

prodvoriye for the feast of the Great Martyr St. Demetrius, did some shopping for Liturgical supplies for St. Basil's back in St. Louis and then attended a discussion with students led by Archbishop Peter at the St. John's Russian Orthodox University in Moscow. The audience enthusiastically participated and asked questions about culture and higher education in America.

The next morning at 3:00 a.m. I left for the airport on my return trip to St. Louis. It was a sad departure for me as in a very short time I had come to love Russia and her people and although I don't speak Russian I none-the-less had come to feel very comfortable in the land of the firebird which has risen above the ashes of communism and come to rekindle its Orthodox

roots. The experience gives me hope for my own native land.

Will I return to Russia; if God wills, I will!

### Message From the Priests

No moving about, buying or lighting candles is allowed during:

- Small Entrance (with the Gospel)
- Reading of the Gospel and during the Sermon
- Great Entrance

Нельзя ходить по храму, покупать и возжигать свѣчи во время:

- Малаго входа (съ Евангеліемъ)
- Чтенія Евангелія и проповѣди
- Великаго входа



### December Spot the Difference

There are twelve differences between the two pictures. Can you find them all?

