

THE MESSENGER

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE ORTHODOX CHURCH

OCTOBER 2012



ST. TIKHON, FIRST BISHOP OF NEW YORK, OCTOBER 9

MARK THE DATES

October 1: Protection of the Theotokos, Liturgy 8:00 AM

October 2-4: Diocesan Assembly, Denver, CO (Father out of town)

October 9: St. Tikhon of Moscow, Liturgy 8:00 AM

October 13: Russian Confessions, 9:00 AM; Slavonic Liturgy, 10:00 AM

October 16: Parish Council Meeting, 6:00 PM

October 26: St. Demetrius of Thessalonica, Liturgy 8:00 AM

Send email addresses and corrections to: frjohn@lasvegasorthodox.com

October 2012

St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church • Las Vegas, Nevada

	1 DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM PROTECTION OF THE THEOTOKOS	2	3 FATHER JOHN OUT OF TOWN OCTOBER 2-4 DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY, DENVER, COLORADO	4	5 ORTHODOX CLERGY MEETING 1:00 PM, St. JOHN'S	6 GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS
7 DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: DRESKO EPISTLE: YOUTH POST-COMM: E. SAS CHURCH SCHOOL	8	9 DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM St. TIKHON OF MOSCOW	10 DAILY VESPERS, 6:30 PM ADULT FAITH FORUM	11 COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM	12	13 RUSSIAN CONFESSIONS, 9 AM SLAVONIC LITURGY 10:00 AM ABP. BENJAMIN HERE GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS
14 CHRISMATION WEEK, 8:45 DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: HOOD EPISTLE: STRANSKY POST-COMM: NORVILLE CHURCH SCHOOL DRESKO-VEEK WEDDING, 3 PM	15	16 PARISH COUNCIL, 6:00 PM	17 DAILY VESPERS, 6:30 PM ADULT FAITH FORUM	18 COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM	19	20 MEMORIAL SATURDAY PANIKHIDA, 4:30 PM GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS
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The Messenger

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OCTOBER 2012

YOU CAN'T OUTGIVE GOD

It is that time once again. It is fall, we are preparing for our annual parish meeting in December, and we are called to reflect upon, pray about and then, of course, **do** something about *stewardship*. Oh no. Not again. But being a steward is not just a duty, not just an obligation. It is, first and foremost, an *opportunity* to reflect the image of God, respond to His Spirit, and prove our love for Him and our trust in Him.

Stewardship is so much more than just “What are you going to give to the parish so we can pay our bills?”. While it is true that the parish has obligations, commitments, and responsibilities just like every other family in the world, that is not why we give our time, talent and treasure to the parish. While it is true that the parish would not function or stay open without our support — we give to the parish because God gives to us and asks us to show our love for Him and our respect for Him by offering from the blessings He gives to us.

In a real sense, God gives to the parish Himself, because nothing we have is from our own

power. Anything that comes into our life, even if the result of our work and effort, is ultimately a gift from God. If we did not have life, or talent, or health, or time, or the opportunity to work, we would have nothing. We are completely and totally dependent upon God.

He asks us, in our dependency, to offer a portion of everything that He has blessed us with back to Him and His Church. There are three characteristics to a holy and acceptable gift:

1. **It is a portion.** God does not ask for an amount from each of us. He asks for a portion (or better yet, a percentage) of everything. The biblical minimum is 10% (a tithe) of everything that He blesses us with. Even if we feel that we can't currently increase our gift or reach a tithe, it is important to give a percentage of that which God gives us. 4%, 5%, 6% - whatever. It is fair, because a percentage is a percentage — 10% of \$100 is the exact same gift as 10% of \$1000. Then we understand that with greater blessings

comes greater responsibility. Those to whom much is given, much is expected.

2. **It is a first-fruits portion.** Our gift is supposed to be off the top, so to speak. In the Scriptures, the gift was always the very first thing commended by God from His followers. We are not supposed to pay all our other bills and then figure out what we can “afford” to give to God. When we offer a first-fruits gift, it demonstrates our love for and trust in God. We believe and trust that He will always provide for Himself and each of us.
3. **It is blameless.** When a shepherd offered a lamb or goat to God, he didn't go his flock, and pick out the sickest, weakest one. He took the best one — without spot or blemish. A gift to God is supposed to be from our **best**, not our **worst**. If our gift is leftovers, or given grudgingly, or cheap, that is disrespectful and shows an appalling lack of trust in God.

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Harold Anagnostopoulos

James Brophy
Alan Buttell

Robert Conductor
Stephen Osburn
Catherine Wilkalis

SUB-COMMITTEES

Building & Grounds
Harold Anagnostopoulos
Nikolai Melnikov

Eritrean & Ethiopian Outreach
Genet Bokre

Russian Outreach
Natalia Minkoff

Church School/Youth
Amy McAuley
Christina Sas

Trust is perhaps the most important aspect and ingredient in godly and stewardly giving. The Scriptures are full of examples (cf. 2 Cor 8-9) that remind us that when we trust God and give to His glory and His mission, we will never be without. He always will provide what is needed to allow someone to make a gift and take care of his needs. But we have confused needs and wants in this world of ours. So we have a hard time trusting God because we don't seem to get what we "need" (but in reality, want).

Many of you reading this have heard me tell the following story in a lengthier version, because it was one of the most powerful events in my life and one that will never be forgotten by me or my wife. It demonstrates how much God loves and cares for us in a very concrete way by providing for us when we provide for Him.

We were just a very young family, poor as church mice (destitute, really), assigned to a new parish, and the first real chance I got to know the people was during the house blessing season. I visited Mike and Helen's house and had a very enjoyable time. They were elderly and I asked them how they were feeling. Mike was doing fine, but Helen had been having some pains in her side and was going to the doctor's later that week to have them checked. It turned out she had advanced cancer and died just a few short weeks after that.

A day or two before the funeral, my wife told me that our four young children needed new shoes, both "play" and "dress."

She said it would be about \$200.00. We did not have the money, I had no idea how I was going to get the money short of robbing a bank, and I just told her to wait. We served Helen's funeral on a Tuesday evening and were driving her to Pennsylvania for burial on Wednesday. Mike and I were alone with Helen's casket waiting for the undertaker in the morning and he said to me, "Father, Helen and I were talking about your visit and how much we enjoyed it. She said, 'You know, Mike, I remember how hard it was buying shoes for our kids. We should give Father John something for the kids.' Father, Helen and I would want you to have this." At that moment, he handed me four fifty dollar bills! We bought the kids shoes and it totaled \$198.76. I was, and am still, speechless.

Mike and Helen, even in death, shared God's love and care with us and proved that with faith and trust, He would always provide. We have tried to provide for Him and have never been without something we need because of it. It was a very powerful and very clear lesson for us on His providence and the need and ability to care for His Church.

I have a friend who is always saying, "You can't outgive God." As we get ready to take stock of our blessings, then prayerfully and seriously contemplate what we can offer to God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and His Body (the Church) and make our pledges, may He fill us with His Spirit to love and trust Him enough to make a first-fruits proportional offering from the very best that we have. It's true. **No**

matter how much we give, we can't outgive God.

- *Father John*

FEASTDAYS

Please join us for the festal celebrations during October.

Protection of the Theotokos
October 1

Divine Liturgy, 8:00 AM (MON)

St. Tikhon of America
October 9

Divine Liturgy, 8:00 AM (TUES)

St. Demetrius of Thessalonica
October 26

Divine Liturgy, 8:00 AM (FRI)

COFFEE HOUR SCHEDULE

Oct 7: Abil

Oct 14: Bica, Osburn, Sufana

Oct 21: Araya, Bokre, Negasi

Oct 28: Bokre

CHURCH CLEANING SCHEDULE

Oct 7: Abil

Oct 14: Tanksley

Oct 21: Bokre, Negasi

Oct 28: Bokre

DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY

The annual Diocesan Assembly of the Diocese of the West will be held at Transfiguration Cathedral in Denver, October 2-4. Father John and delegate Jim Brophy will be attending. Please pray for their safe travel and wisdom in deliberations.

SLAVONIC LITURGY

The monthly Slavonic Liturgy will be served on the second Saturday of the month, October 13, as usual. Fr. Alexander will be hearing Russian language confessions at 9:00 AM. The liturgy is scheduled to begin at 10:00 AM.

VISIT OF ARCHBISHOP BENJAMIN

His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin, will be visiting St. Paul's on the weekend of October 13-14 to celebrate services with us and share in the joy of the marriage of Juliana Dresko and Brian Veek. Please join us for this special weekend.

2013 STEWARDSHIP DRIVE

October is Stewardship Month in our parish as we get ready for our annual parish meeting in December and the planning of our 2013 Operating Budget. We will reflect on, pray about and then commit to our support of the parish in the next calendar year. Pledge Forms will be available for you to fill out and make a prayerful and thoughtful gift to God and His Church. *As a reminder, to be a voting member of our parish you must have a signed Pledge Form on file at the office in addition to your sacramental participation in Confession and Communion at St. Paul's.*

FESTIVAL RECONSIDERED

Due to a number of transitions going on in the parish the annual International Food Festival will not be held this year. The parish council and parish leadership will retool the festival and the whole plan for next year and come back with a renewed sense of fellowship and accomplishment. ***A different type of event will be held in early November*** before the beginning of the Nativity Fast to give us a chance to share fellowship and support the parish.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

- Our schedule for the **weekly**

clean-up of the church needs volunteers. The duty is easy, takes two hours at the most, and you can do it at your convenience as Father will provide a key and entry instructions. Also needed:

- **Coffee Hour** volunteers are needed.
- **Bell-ringer** volunteers are needed.
- **Greeters** are needed.

Please offer some time and talent to the Lord in the care of His Church. Sign-up lists are available in the church.

ADULT CLASSES

We have begun the new series of Wednesday evening talks in our Adult Faith Forum: *Theology in Color: Iconography of the Orthodox Church*. We have daily vespers at 6:30 PM, followed by a one-hour discussion. Please join us!

COFFEE CHAT

We meet on Thursdays, at 10:00 AM at El Rancho on Pecos and Russell unless otherwise announced. Everyone is invited.

FEED THE HUNGRY CHANGE

Our next scheduled date is Saturday, November 3rd. ***This is a date change!*** Join us! If you can donate any of the items needed for the lunches, it would be appreciated. **We also have a need for basic toiletries: toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, etc.** If you have any *travel* size items, leave them in the bin in the church vestibule. Thank you!

PARENTS NOTICE

All strollers are to be kept on the front of the north side of the church to allow free flow of the

traffic. Not only will this help with crowd movement, it is safer for you, your child and those around you. Thank you!

Please note that with the start of church school, the room on the north side of the vestibule formerly used as a “cry room” will be unavailable for use during services. If you need a time out for your child or a diaper change, please go to one of the restrooms or for a short walk in the courtyard.

PRAYER FOR OUR PARISH

We ask everyone to remember our parish in daily prayer:

Lord, God and Savior of all, we thank You for the blessing of St. Paul parish in our lives. May Your word become alive in each and every one of us who strive to follow You. Please bless and multiply all the gifts — time, talent and treasure — which are given in thanks to benefit our mission and glorify Your name. Bless and multiply the givers and help us all to make present Your Kingdom. For You are the Giver of all that is good, O Christ our God, and to You we give glory, together with Your Father who is without beginning and Your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

CHARITY

Our normal collections of food for Friends of the Desert continue. *Special needs at this time: jelly, jam, peanut butter, canned fruit, canned tuna/chicken.* Thank you!

SACRAMENTS/SPECIAL SERVICES

Please follow these guidelines.

• **Baptisms.** A date and time must be requested at least three

weeks in advance. In addition, a personal meeting scheduled with Fr. John will be necessary.

• **Matrimony.** A date and time for weddings must be requested at least six months (preferably twelve) in advance. There will be premarital sessions for both bride and groom to attend.

• **Memorials (Panikhida).** Requests for a memorial must be made at least one week in advance. If possible, the service should not be served on Sunday, the Day of the Resurrection, when all departed have already been remembered in the Liturgy.

PARISH COUNCIL SYNOPSIS SEPTEMBER 25, 2012 MEETING

Rector's Report:

Father noted, officially for the minutes, Aaron Oliver and his decision and subsequent action to abandon the Orthodox Church and the Holy Priesthood.

Reminded the council that he and Jim Brophy would be attending the Diocesan Assembly in Denver October 2-4.

Vice President: Laura Draskovic thanked Harry for taking care of some needed repairs in the Ladies Room.

She opened a discussion about how we relate to the various groups in the parish who are having separate services. Council decided that we would meet with and voice our expectations to the groups about donations expected, cleaning up after use, etc.

Treasurer's Report: Karen Short distributed reports to council members earlier via e-mail. We are behind in assessments but should be caught up in

early fall. Income for August was: \$16,521.00, and expenses of \$16,883.16 for a **deficit of \$362.16.**

YTD 8/31/12

2012 YTD Inc \$ 155,282.34

2012 YTD Exp \$ 143,647.23

Inc over Exp \$ 11,635.11

Buildings and Grounds:

- Harry reported on three projects since the last minutes. First, he has begun repairs on the shrine in the courtyard, which has some serious weather damage.
- He noted at least three leaks in the church building during the last heavy rain. He will contact a roofer for an estimate on diagnosis and repair.
- The areas to the immediate left and right of the iconostasis were not painted because we thought the iconography project would be done by now, allowing use of the scaffolding. Since it is not, Harry will arrange with a painter to finish the very high spots.
- In addition, the threshold in the men's room need replacing, the parking lot is fast approaching the need for weeding and resealing and we need to plan for the upgrading of the HVAC units in the church.

Church School/Youth:

Father John reported that the start of the church school year went very well and there seems to be a new enthusiasm with different ideas, teachers and curriculum. The directors will be discussing some social and service projects for the kids.

Charity:

Our usual projects continue. The next Feeding the Homeless project was scheduled for October 27, but has been moved to November 3 due to another commitment by Father.

Eritrean/Ethiopian: They are having monthly meetings which seem to be going well.

Outreach/Website: Father John has the sermons up to date on the website.

Russian: Father will meet with the leaders of the Russian community at St. Paul's to discuss concerns by the council.

It was reiterated that the use of the former "cry room" is off limits to everyone except for the pre-school class. It is to remain locked at all other times, even for the services held by others.

Stewardship: Pledge drive begins again. Father hopes to "personalize" the pledge forms, at least for those who have a current form on file.

OLD BUSINESS

Bell Tower: Power wash still needs to be done. Cathy Wilkalis has a sign-up sheet to recruit other bell ringers. There is going to be a bell-ringing class.

Wine tasting/Cook-off Fundraiser: Father is going to speak with former parishioner, Theresa Patterson, who is a sommelier for assistance having a wine-tasting party.

Iconography Project: Father John has made contact with Vova Krassovsky, our iconographer. No change in information.

25th Anniversary: The "Save the

Date" magnets will be addressed and prepared on Thursday, September 27.

Seminarian Funding: Monthly support is being sent to SVS.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 16, 2012, 6:00 PM.

PARISH DIPTYCHS

This list of parish departed is to remind us all of those whom we love and miss and to spur us to remember them in our daily prayers. They will be remembered in the proskomedia before each liturgy.

MONTH OF OCTOBER

Nikola Levrich
October 3, 1989

Anna Shrive
October 6, 1999

Darrell George Brezoff
October 6, 1999

Harry George Turlish
October 7, 1994

Svetislav Djoric
October 7, 1994

John Pavelle
October 7, 2003

Elmas Boyajian
October 17, 1997

James Manassess
October 17, 1997

John (Thouas) Thomas
October 21, 1989

Helen Friesl
October 26, 2004

Simona Heckel
October 27, 1991

Maria Hernandez
October 27, 2007

Sophia Mouratithou
October 31, 1991

Stanley Andrews
October 31, 1993

Milton Kevershan
October 31, 1995

Ernest Kanakis
October 31, 1997

DO YOU LOVE THE WORLD?

by E.G. Link

The Bible is full of caution lights warning us when we are about to head off course and into spiritual trouble. John issues one of those warnings to us, "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).

It is quite interesting that John tells us to not love (agape) the world (cosmos) with the very same Greek words that Jesus used when He told us that "God so loved (agape) the world (cosmos)..." (John 3:16). So, since we know that God cannot contradict Himself, there must be a way in which we are to love the world and a way in which we are to not love the world. We can understand this apparent contradiction in the following way.

A spiritually healthy love for the world desires to give something to it [the gospel]. The rest of John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave."

A spiritually sick love for the world desires to get something from it. I John 2:16 says, "For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world."

What is troubling about John's warning is that it doesn't give us much guidance on how to identify whether we do in fact love the world and the things of the world. Is it enough that we say we love God and we don't love the world or the things of the world? Is our profession enough? I don't know about you, but my words have often betrayed me. I have found on occasion that I am not really what I say I am. (What is on the outside is not what is on the inside.)

So, it is necessary for us to look deeper than just our words. We must look at our hearts and observe our actions to determine if we are indeed in love with the world and the things of the world.

I have identified four, flashing, "caution lights" that should warn us that we might indeed have gotten into an illicit love affair with the world and the things of this world.

Caution Light #1

We are falling in love with the world... when we are never quite satisfied with what we have.

Solomon says in Ecclesiastes 5:10, "Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income." Are you truly satisfied with what you have right now? If you never got anything more for the rest of your life would that be ok with you?

Or, do you find yourself drawn to the newest technology gadget, a bigger or better car, another exotic travel destination, the latest fashion, a newer or bigger home, or another way to make more money. Is your life characterized by wanting and getting more stuff?

Solomon again warns us in Ecclesiastes 6:7, "All man's efforts are for his mouth, yet his appetite is never satisfied." Is your appetite satisfied with what you have right now or will it take more?

Caution Light #2

We are falling in love with the world... when the things we own end up owning us.

Jesus reminded us that we only have one throne and He wants to be on it. He tells us in Matthew 6:24, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

Demas was one of Paul's mission entourage. Paul is grieved to report to Timothy (II Timothy 4:10) that "Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me..." That is what happens when we love the world and the things of the world. You cannot have both on the same throne.

Jesus tells us in Luke 12:15, "... Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when

one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions." We can own things, but things better not own us.

It is easy enough to get so emotionally attached to our things that we do not want to part with them or give them away. The greater our love for our things, the more tightly we grip them. The great holocaust survivor Corrie Ten Boom often spoke these words of wisdom, "Hold loosely to the things of this life, so that if God requires them of you, it will be easy to let them go."

What was the rich, young ruler's obstacle to following Jesus? "But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property (Matthew 19:22)." He didn't own his possessions. His possessions owned him. And they would not let go of him.

Caution Light #3

We are falling in love with the world... when worry about losing our things is disrupting our inner peace.

Recent times have certainly given us all ample opportunity to discern if worry about material loss has been disrupting our inner peace. When times are good, we may never even notice Caution Light #3, but when retirement funds plummet, the values of our real estate is in a free fall and our business revenues are off substantially, all this can reveal a love for the world and the things of the world that we may have never really noticed.

Paul reminds us that our financial condition should have nothing to do with our inner peace and contentment in life. He says in Philippians 4:11-12, "Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need."

Being content when you have a lot is quite easy, but being content with less or much less than we have grown comfortable with can be very unsettling and reveal the actual depth of our affection for the things of this world.

If you have placed your faith in your things instead of the One who has provided those things, you are in

danger. Hebrews 13:5 points this out clearly, "Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, 'I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.'"

If we were stripped of all our worldly possessions and stood penniless, would we still be content and filled with inner peace, confident that our loving Father is still on the throne and will never, ever forsake us?

Caution Light #4

We are falling in love with the world... when our longing to be there is diminished by our affection for what we have here.

Mrs. Jones asked her eight year old Sunday school class, "How many of you would like to go to Heaven?" Every child in the class raised his hand except Billy. Mrs. Jones asked curiously, "Billy, don't you want to go to Heaven?" He replied, "Sure I do, I just thought you were taking up a bus load right now!" Billy was glad to go to Heaven, just not right now.

When I was a teenager my grandmother had a heart attack and fell into unconsciousness. Her four daughters (one was my mother) got together and made the decision for the doctors to insert a pacemaker to keep her alive. I remember to this day how furious my grandmother was when she awoke in the hospital and realized that she was still here. She so longed to go to be with the Lord that the life saving intervention of a pacemaker only prevented her from getting where she longed to go. My grandmother's unhappy reaction to still being here is etched permanently in my mind.

I am reminded of what Paul said in II Corinthians 5:8, "prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord." If you were given the choice today, would you prefer to go be with the Lord or would you prefer to stay here? Are you more like Billy or my grandmother?

As we continue to live in this materialistic culture of ours, may we all keep our eyes carefully peeled for these four caution lights so we might not unintentionally end up becoming an illicit lover of the world and the things of the world.

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