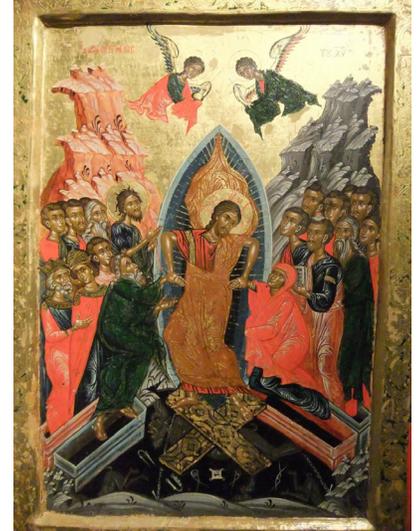


## APRIL 2017 • CHRIST IS RISEN! A Life of Resurrection

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

These words, so full of joy, so full of hope, ring out as we celebrate once again the Mystery of the Passion and the Resurrection of our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Annually, we face the long and arduous journey of Great Lent, struggling with our sins and passions, fasting to gain control over such things, repenting of those sins and trying to be mindful of the things of God instead of the usual, mundane trifles of our daily lives. At the end of those holy days, come days even holier! We enter into Holy Week.



As with all the celebrations of the Church, we do not gather to simply remember events. We gather to mystically enter into those events. So before we experience the full joy of the Resurrection, we must enter into Jerusalem with Jesus, spreading the garments of our souls before Him as He receives the shouts of “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” We must then travel back and forth to Bethany with Him as He slowly but surely moves towards the Passion. We hear the condemnations of the Pharisees. We hear the parables of the Kingdom. We close the door to the upper room and witness the First (and Last) Supper, marveling that He chooses to feed us with Himself. We hear the various Gospel narratives of Gethsemane, the arrest, the trial, and final the execution order. We stand at the foot of the Cross with John and the women. We help Joseph and Nicodemus carefully bury the Body of the Lord. And we descend into Sheol with Him as He shatters the gates of hell itself in that “active repose” of the Blessed Sabbath. Finally, we come to the empty tomb to witness the Resurrection of the Lord. We enter into it all.

What does it mean to enter into and live a resurrected life? Jesus didn’t die so HE could be resurrected. He died so that each and every one of US could be resurrected. The only way that could happen was for Him to do it for us. So in accepting that great and most holy of gifts, we promise to live the resurrection that He has given to us. How do we do that?

Paradoxically (or maybe not so paradoxically), we begin the resurrected life by dying. Just as Pascha cannot happen without Holy Friday and Golgotha, Great Lent is a small experience of that – dying to ourselves in a personal “Golgotha” so we might live a life that is not of this world even though we are in the world. The fasting, prayer and repentance are all a death and a resurrection: a death to the things of this world and a life to the things of the Kingdom. Only a redeemed, forgiven and resurrected being can share in that.

Every single Christian begins the journey to the Kingdom by dying. He said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That

# APRIL 2017

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

<p><b>Apr 30</b>          DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM          HOURS: H. DEMKO          EPISTLE: BITSKO          POST-COMM: HALLIDAY          CHURCH SCHOOL</p>	<p>GREETERS</p> <p>APR 2: MURPHY/OSBURN          APR 9: MCAULEY/WHEELER          APR 16: ALL GREETERS          APR 23: STAFFORD/DEMKO          APR 30: CAMPBELL/CHONG</p>					<p><b>1</b>          LENTEN RETREAT,          BISHOP ILYA KATRE          St. JOHN's, 9:00-3:30</p> <p>GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM          CONFESSIONS          CHOIR REHEARSAL</p>
<p><b>2</b>          DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM          HOURS: YOUTH          EPISTLE: YOUTH          POST-COMM: YOUTH          CHURCH SCHOOL</p> <p>LENTEN VESPERS,          5:00 PM, St. MICHAEL'S</p>	<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>5</b>          Confessions, 5:30 PM          LITURGY OF THE          PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS,          6:30 PM</p>	<p><b>6</b>          ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM          COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p>	<p><b>7</b>          BAPTISM, 10:00 AM  <b>CHURCH CLEAN-UP</b></p> <p>VESPERS OF LAZARUS          SATURDAY, 6:30 PM</p>	<p><b>8</b>          PROSKOMEDIA AND          DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM  <b>LAZARUS SATURDAY</b></p> <p>VESPERS/PALMS, 5:00 PM          CONFESSIONS</p>
<p><b>9</b>          CHRISMATION OF          ANNE KAUFMAN          DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM          HOURS: HOOD          EPISTLE: HUFFMAN          POST-COMM: BROOKS  <b>PALM SUNDAY</b></p>	<p><b>HOLY MONDAY 10</b>          BRIDEGROOM MATINS,          6:30 PM</p>	<p><b>HOLY TUESDAY 11</b>          BRIDEGROOM MATINS,          6:30 PM</p>	<p><b>HOLY WEDNESDAY 12</b>          BRIDEGROOM MATINS,          6:30 PM</p>	<p><b>HOLY THURSDAY 13</b>          VESPERAL LITURGY          OF ST. BASIL, 9:00 AM</p> <p>MATINS OF HOLY          THURSDAY with PASSION          GOSPELS, 6:30 PM</p>	<p><b>HOLY FRIDAY 14</b>          VESPERS OF HOLY FRIDAY,          3:00 PM</p> <p>SOUP/BREAD          MATINS OF HOLY          SATURDAY, 5:00 PM</p>	<p><b>HOLY SATURDAY 15</b>          VESPERAL LITURGY          OF ST. BASIL, 9:00 AM</p> <p>NOCTURNE, PASCHAL MATINS,          PASCHAL LITURGY, 11:00 PM  <b>BLESSING OF BASKETS</b></p>
<p><b>16</b>          PASCHAL VESPERS,          12:00 PM  <b>HOLY PASCHA</b></p>	<p><b>FAST FREE 17</b>          PASCHAL LITURGY, 9:00 AM</p>	<p><b>FAST FREE 18</b>          PARISH COUNCIL, 6:30 PM</p>	<p><b>FAST FREE 19</b>          ERITREAN WEDDING, 11 AM</p>	<p><b>FAST FREE 20</b>          ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM          COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p>	<p><b>FAST FREE 21</b></p>	<p><b>FAST FREE 22</b>          GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM          CONFESSIONS</p>
<p><b>23</b>          DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM          HOURS: JARLSON          EPISTLE: W. DEMKO          POST-COMM: WHEELER</p> <p>AGAPE MEAL          GRAVE BLESSINGS</p>	<p><b>24</b></p>	<p><b>25</b></p>	<p><b>26</b></p>	<p><b>27</b>          ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM          COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p>	<p><b>28</b></p>	<p><b>29</b>          GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM          CONFESSIONS</p>

# St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

PO Box 12635  
5400 Annie Oakley Drive  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89112-0635  
702.898.4800  
www.lasvegasorthodox.com

## RECTOR

Archpriest John J. Dresko  
1747 Crystal Downs Ave  
Las Vegas, NV 89123  
860.833.4921 (Mobile)  
fatherjohn@lasvegasorthodox.com

Father Stephen Osburn, Jr.  
(702) 521-6988

## CHOIR DIRECTORS

Matushka Elizabeth Dresko  
Grace Brooks  
Jarrod Huffman

## PARISH COUNCIL

Virginia Hood, Vice-President  
Karen Short, Treasurer  
Catherine Wilkalis, Secretary

Gregory Brooks  
James Brophy  
Kevin McAuley  
Karen Murphy  
Litsa Osburn  
Joseph Wheeler

## SUB-COMMITTEES

Building & Grounds  
Kevin McAuley

Eritrean & Ethiopian Outreach  
Tekeste Nuguru

Russian Outreach  
Natalia Minkoff

Church School/Youth  
Fr. Stephen Osburn, Jr.  
Amy McAuley

Fellowship Committee  
Charity Committee

which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’” (John 3:5-7) We die in the waters of baptism, sharing in His death. We rise from those waters as new beings in His resurrection. We are then sealed with the Holy Spirit, who will empower us to live the resurrected life. The Church celebrates the very same reality: we enter into the Resurrection after the death of fasting, then stand with the Apostles as the Fire of the Holy Spirit descends on the Day of Pentecost.

Just as the newly inspired Apostles then went out into the world, we must do so also. The beautiful temple lights go out, the music ends (for a moment), the foods, which we denied to ourselves for so long, are enjoyed, and then we go home and back to our lives. And we begin to live the resurrected life in the very same world we did battle with for those long weeks of Lent.

But something is different. Just as new beings rise from the waters of baptism, we are not the same beings we were

at the beginning of this effort. We have experienced the Resurrection of Christ. So we go back into the world armed with a new reality. We don’t have to be – indeed, we can’t be – the persons we were just a few weeks ago, not to mention a few years ago. The emotional joy of the Feast will fade, but the spiritual joy lasts forever. We live in a continual state of growth in the knowledge of God, His Son and Spirit, and the redemption given to us in the Resurrection.

We have been to Golgotha. Let’s all make sure we travel to the Empty Tomb. Daily.

Christ is Risen!

*Father John*

## FEASTDAYS

During April, our festal celebrations center around Holy Week and Pascha:

### LAZARUS SATURDAY

April 8

VESPERS OF LAZARUS, 9:00 AM (FRI)

PUBLIC PROSKOMEDIA AND

DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM (SAT)

## AT A GLANCE...

**Apr 1: LENTEN RETREAT, St. John’s Church, 9:00-3:30**  
Choir Rehearsal following Vespers

**Apr 7: CHURCH CLEAN-UP, 11:00 AM**

**Apr 8: Proskomedia and Liturgy, 9:00 AM; LAZARUS SATURDAY**  
Preparation of palms and willows after liturgy  
Vespers, Litiya and Blessing of Palms, 5:00 PM

**Apr 9: CHRISMATION OF ANNIE KAUFMAN, 9:00 AM (PALM SUNDAY)**

**Apr 10-15: HOLY WEEK (see calendar for service schedule)**

**Apr 16: THE HOLY PASCHA**

**Apr 17: Bright Monday Paschal Liturgy, 9:00 AM**

**Apr 18: Parish Council Meeting, 6:00 PM**

**Apr 23: Agape Meal following Liturgy**

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

## ENTRANCE OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM

April 9

VESPERS, LITTYA, AND BLESSING OF  
PALMS AND BRANCHES, 5:00 PM (SAT)  
DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM (SUN)

## HOLY WEEK SERVICES

April 10-15

SEE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## THE HOLY PASCHA

April 16

NOCTURNE, PASCHAL MATINS,  
PASCHAL LITURGY, BLESSING OF  
BASKETS, 11:00 PM (SAT EVENING)

VESPERS OF PASCHA, 12:00 PM (SUN)  
SECOND BLESSING OF BASKETS

## BRIGHT MONDAY

April 17

PASCHAL LITURGY, 9:00 AM (SAT)

## CONFESSIONS/FASTING

During Great Lent, every Orthodox Christian of confessing age makes the journey to the Sacrament of Confession. Scheduled times are listed in the calendar, and **Fr. John does not mind making appointments**. Please note that **after the Eve of Palm Sunday (April 8)**, confessions will **only** be heard by appointment.

Fasting for the Eucharist on Wednesday evenings is as follows: for those who are physically able to do so, nothing to eat or drink during the day before Holy Communion. If you are unable to be that rigorous, you should fast from a light noontime meal, no later than 1:00 PM if possible. Please see Father John if you have unique circumstances (job, etc.).

## ANNUAL LENTEN RETREAT

The annual Lenten Retreat sponsored by the Clark County Orthodox Clergy Association will be held on Saturday, April 1, at St. John Church, 9:00-3:30. Bishop Ilya (Katre) will lead us on a discussion of *When you*

*pray, say these words*. Cost is \$15.00 payable to St. Paul Church – please register with Father John so we know how many to plan for food.

## CHURCH CLEAN-UP

Following the baptism of Eve Kamalov on Friday, April 7, we will have a general clean-up of the temple for Holy Week and Pascha. We anticipate starting at 11:00 AM. Anyone who might be free, we would certainly appreciate the help.

## SLAVONIC SERVICES

**There will be no Slavonic services in April, as the second Saturday falls on Lazarus Saturday.** Father Alexander will be here as usual on May 13 for services. Russian Confessions begin at 9:00 AM, and the Slavonic Liturgy at 10:00 AM.

## LAZARUS SATURDAY

On Saturday, April 8, we will celebrate the Proskomedia (the preparation of the Gifts to be offered at liturgy) in the center of the church. All parishioners, especially children, are encouraged to join us for this special celebration. All will have the opportunity to have their specific list of loved ones remembered. We begin at 9:00 AM, then go right into the Liturgy of Lazarus Saturday.

Following the liturgy, we will need some assistance in preparing the palms, willows and olives branches for blessing that evening.

## CHRISMATION

Following a year-long preparation, the handmaiden of God, Anne Kaufman, will be received into the Holy Orthodox Church before the Liturgy of Palm Sunday on April 9 through the Sacrament of Chrismation. May God grant her many years of service in His Holy Church!

## HOLY WEEK

Everyone is encouraged to journey with us through Holy Week to the Passion, Death, Burial, and Resurrection of our Lord. Come to as many services as you can. Read a Gospel. Fast and pray seriously. One week of very intense focus for the year is manageable!

## PASCHA

Our Paschal services begin at 11:00 PM on Saturday evening, April 15. We will have Nocturne, Paschal Procession, Paschal Matins, and Paschal Liturgy. Following the liturgy, we will have the traditional blessing of baskets at the church hall. Doors to the hall are locked at 10:55 PM and not unlocked until after the services. If you arrive after that, tables will be available in the courtyard for you to place your baskets. **There will be reserved tables in the hall for the choir and clergy.** You are asked to accommodate those who have labored hard by avoiding those tables and/or a scene over the reservations.

A second blessing of baskets will take place after the Vespers of Pascha on Sunday afternoon at noon.

Bright Week (Monday- Saturday following Pascha) is a *fast-free week* in the Orthodox Church.

## AGAPE MEAL/EGG HUNT

The traditional Agape Meal will be celebrated on Thomas Sunday, April 23, following the liturgy. Meats are provided by the parish, but a potluck sign-up list for sides, salads and desserts will be available in the hall.

Our children's annual egg hunt will be held at the end of the Agape Meal. Please join us!

## GRAVE BLESSING

Following the agape meal on April 23, we will be going to bless graves for Thomas Sunday. We begin at Davis

Cemetery, stop at Palm Eastern and then out to Boulder City Municipal and Boulder City Veterans. Arrangements for other cemeteries will be made with individuals.

### LOOKING INTO MAY

The Diocese of the West will be hosting a mandatory post-Pascha retreat for all clergy May 2-4. Fathers John and Stephen will be Alhambra, CA for this event.

Our Adult Faith Forum will resume classes on **Wednesday, May 10**, with Daily Vespers at 6:30 PM, following by discussion. We will complete our discussion on *The Parables of Christ* then break for the summer.

### PROJECT MEXICO

It's on! We are going to be sending another mission team to Project Mexico next summer to help build a house. You can help support this trip by doing your Amazon shopping using our "smile" account:

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/88-0242982>

Also, a gofundme page has been set up to allow direct donations. Please consider making a donation and sharing the link!

<https://www.gofundme.com/stpaulmexicotrip>

### FEEDING THE HOMELESS

Our next Feeding the Homeless project will be held on a date to be determined after Pascha. We will construct the lunches and bag all of the items which we distribute at 10:30 AM. We then take them downtown and distribute them and are usually done by 1:00 PM. Please join us! If you can donate any of the items needed for the lunches (or funds to provide such), it would be appreciated.

### IOCC

Joe Wheeler has been serving as our

parish liaison to International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC). His schedule no longer allows him to carry out these duties. If you are interested in helping us out in this position, please talk to Joe to see what it entails and then see Father John.

### ICONOGRAPHY

The next phase of our iconography project will be to complete the east walls of the church (to the left and right of the sanctuary). Renderings are available in the church hall and you are urged to take a look. This is a MAJOR project which will require substantial funding. The two renderings posted in the hall will cost \$36,000 each, a total of \$72,000. **We are once again accepting donations to the Icon Fund. Please consider making an offering above and beyond your normal support of the parish!**

### CHARITY

Our normal collections of food for Friends of the Desert continue. Needs: jelly, jam, peanut butter, canned fruit, canned tuna/chicken. Thank you!

### ORTHODOX VENDORS

A list of businesses that our parish uses or are owned and operated by Orthodox Christians (some parishioners). We provide this information for you to consider if you need services.

CB Air Conditioning  
Cedomir Blagojevic  
(702) 493-0295

Kyklos Café (Greek food)  
Galleria Mall  
Sophocles Frangakis  
(702) 450-1515

Makeup and Hair Artist  
Natalia Kasimtseva (Baker)  
(I travel to client location)  
Text or call: (702) 336-8300

View portfolio at:

[www.facebook.com/NataliaKasBeauty](http://www.facebook.com/NataliaKasBeauty)

Taffer Computers  
*Website Design, Marketing,  
& Computer Repair*

Fr. Stephen Osburn  
(702) 521-6988

### 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.

### SACRAMENTS/SPECIAL SERVICES

Please follow these guidelines.

- Baptisms. A personal meeting scheduled with Fr. John will be necessary to schedule any baptism requested.
- 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 be served on Saturday. Other requests will be met as pastorally possible.

PARISH COUNCIL SYNOPSIS  
MARCH 21, 2017 MEETING

*Rector's Report:* Fr. John opened with apologies for missing the last council meeting. He could not get away from the OCA Financial Development Committee meeting to call in.

Reminder to everyone that we are hosting the Lenten Vespers March 26. He also mentioned the Lenten Retreat to be held on April 1 at St. John's Church.

In speaking about Holy Week schedule adjustments he noted that we will not be serving the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday of Holy Week, citing age and fatigue on the part of both he and Matushka Liz.

He noted to the Parish Council that he will be taking some vacation time in May (9-18), following Pascha.

*Associate Priest's Report:* announced that he has designed and is in charge of maintaining the website of OCCIF (Orthodox Church Capital Improvement Fund).

*Vice President's Report:* Informed council that she and Amy are co-ordinating the Easter Egg Hunt for Thomas Sunday, April 23.

*Treasurer's Report:* Karen Short distributed our financials before the meeting:

Capital Fund: \$247.42  
Rainy Day: \$27,243.46  
Icon Fund: \$1,947.00

Income for February was \$26,031.46, with expenses of \$20,370.77 for a surplus of \$5,660.69.

2017 YTD FINANCIALS

2017 Inc	\$ 58,699.10
2017 Exp	\$ 42,898.53
Inc over Exp	\$ 15,800.57

Karen reported Accounts Payable is totally current. Amortization on the

bond issue is done twice a year in March and September. GoldStar pays out on the bonds and short term bonds in those months. The payoff that we sent at the end of December 2016 reduced our payout one full year. Those bonds have been redeemed, with the holders being notified and paid.

COMMITTEES

*Buildings and Grounds:*

*Doors:* The weather seals and hardware have been installed on the new hall and restroom doors, with the exception of the ladies room, which was inadvertently locked after the Russian service.

*Parking Lot Wall Repairs:*

Complete. Painting will be scheduled at the same time as the door project being complete to avoid two trips for the painters.

*Sound Panels:* The final panels still need to be put up in hall. Ongoing.

*Courtyard:* Kevin received a bid for putting a stamped concrete platform over the courtyard. Ginny also received a rough estimate from landscaper for decorative flat rocks and a border. Kevin will continue to investigate for next meeting.

*Carpeting:* It was noted that the "oriental" rugs in the church need replacement. Father is working with Sean Campbell with dealers, who will get bids, and is trying to get new carpets donated. Will pursue after Pascha.

*Cleaning:* Wes Jarlson has volunteered to coordinate cleaning efforts after liturgy on Sundays. He will also keep maintenance of the interior on a regular basis.

*Charity:* Next Homeless feeding schedule to be determined. Efforts continue to be strong and well-funded.

*IOCC:* no report. Replacement for Joe is still an ongoing effort.

*Church School/Youth:* The teen retreat at St. John's was held March 17-18 conducted by Fr Matthew assisted by Fr Stephen. Seven youths from our parish attended. We had three adult volunteers also: Danny and Nina Drake and Tiffani Gonzalez. Thanks to them!

*Project Mexico:* Fr. Stephen reported that fundraising is going well, with about \$6,700 already raised. The See's candy sale will be closed out this Sunday. Hummus and sambusa sales are going very well, with many orders.

*Eritrean/Ethiopian:* status quo

*Fellowship:* no report.

*Outreach/website:* Website will receive a couple of minor tweaks - otherwise is looking good.

*Russian:* status quo. No service in April due to Lazarus Saturday.

*Stewardship:* no report

OLD BUSINESS

*Greeters Training:* no report.

*Sunshine Group:* status quo

NEW BUSINESS

*Legal Matters:* Although we have made every effort to be accommodating and have determined that the water problems for our neighbors is natural and beyond our control, we have been threatened with legal action by April 1 if we "do not rectify the matter." Father John has a meeting with our attorney on Wednesday, March 22, to engage services for our protection.

*Pascha Preparations:* all the palms and willows have been ordered for Palm Sunday. Litsa will provide olive branches again. Flowers for the tomb have also been ordered.

**A general clean up of the church will take on Friday, April 7,** following a schedule baptism. Carpets

will be steamed and cleaned after the Pascha and Bright Monday services.

The agape meal is scheduled for Thomas Sunday, April 23. Viorel Ionescu will again offer services as chef for the day. A cash advance was approved for him to purchase the meats for the dinner.

*Choir Director:* Matushka Liz is nearing the point when she must reduce the demands required of her as a full-time choir director. Discussions begun to plan for this with the hopes that duties can be split with another director, eventually leading to a full-time replacement. An additional stipend will be considered depending on the resolution of this matter. Eventually, a more appropriate stipend for this position must be considered in our budget planning.

*Next Council Meeting:*  
Tuesday, April 18, 2017, 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.

### MONTH OF APRIL

Henry VanBenthem  
April 2, 1996

Helen Turlish  
April 4, 1993

Irene Sachanko  
April 4, 2012

Ann Carol Boris  
April 7, 1997

Sebastian Bica  
April 7, 2008

Vasil Smith  
April 8, 2002

Homer Koliba  
April 11, 2011

Svetlana Tarabanova  
April 13, 2008

Alexander Mednikov  
April 18, 2009

Nadya Gridneva  
April 19, 2008

Marie Hudson  
April 24, 1997

Mariam Kidane  
April 27, 1995

Melvin Korich  
April 29, 1996

Larisa Martin  
April 29, 2004

Mary Volz  
April 29, 2006

Anastasios Lymeropoulos  
April 30, 1990

### FATHER STEPHEN'S CORNER

#### CHILDREN ARE THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH

Since I will soon be the father of a newborn (or already am, depending on the publication of this reflection), I've spent quite a bit of time pondering the role of children in the liturgical services of the Church. Of course there is the obvious reasoning for this but this notion has left me to also reflect pastorally on how we address the children's place in our services.

In the Orthodox Faith, the moment children are baptized they become regular communicants. Unlike the Western churches (Catholic, Anglican, Protestant, etc.) they are permitted to receive the Body and Blood of

Christ the moment they have been received into the Church. This notion is understood because Christ, Himself says to not hinder the little children for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them as well (Mt. 19:14). Yet, the common perception of kids in the Church has mixed reactions. There are some who would argue that children should be seen but not heard. They should remain compliant and still. They should not be distractions or move about but stay in their place and in order. (I've heard this as a reason for pews because it makes them easier to control; I don't agree with this but I digress.) On the flip side, there is the opinion that children should be free to roam throughout the Nave. They should be able to see the movements of the congregation, how they cross and prostrate, be allowed to engage and venerate the icons, light candles, familiarize themselves with the structure of the services by walking about as to copycat the clergy and servers, and to sing with the choir even though they probably don't know what they are saying.

As I have spent the last few months personally reflecting on this, I have to say I am more inclined with the latter argument. Children need to feel like they are part of the community and for this to happen, they need a level of freedom during services. This doesn't mean they should cause distraction or disturb the services, but they should be allowed to engage in the manners I listed above. Children are the foundation of our community and many of our young people leave the Church because they never were given that necessary level of formation. A child learns through experience. It is not logical nor is it rational; but it is clear that a child's perception of reality is reinforced by how they interact with their environment. So by not allowing

them to experience the fullness of the liturgical services, we are hindering their development and growth in the Church - and possibly even hurting their salvation.

However, this does not mean the parents hold no control over their child. Don't allow a child to run up to the Ambo and through the Royal Doors or allow them to goof around during the priest's sermon (they need to hear those words too). On the contrary, it is a parent's duty to guide and lead their children to make good decisions. This means they must extend the patience and perseverance practiced at home into the life of the Church. Raising children is a huge responsibility but it is also a work of love. It is not easy by any means, but parents must be aware that the behavior of their children is reflected in them. If a child is screaming in Church, then it is the

parent's duty to take the child out for a moment, calm them down, and bring them back into the service once they are able. With play, there is a time and place for everything and just because we do not allow children to play in the church does not mean that we do not understand their need to play. Those children need to be in the service. Allow them to explore.

The Body of Christ is more fully present when the Church is filled with their little joyful noise and they need to learn that our worship in the services is important for not just our souls, but theirs as well.

So I end by saying once again, when we look at the children of our Church we are to be reminded that they are the future. Without them, there is no Church. Without our children, the community suffers. God exists as Fa-

ther, Son, and Holy Spirit. Three persons in One. An eternal Communion and Family. When we treat the kids with this level of respect, in a similar manner as we do with adults, we help disrupt or lessen the odds that when they are old enough they will leave the Church. Finally, remember that the "Home" is meant to be a reflection of the Church. It is a "little church" in relation. We do not exclude our children or hinder their growth at home; rather, we encourage them to grow and learn through experience and love. We want to see them grow and become good citizens and contributors to society. Similar, we want to see our children grow and become good communicants in the Kingdom of Heaven. So let them be free to roam but also kept in just enough check so that the next generation can do so likewise and we can all experience the Kingdom together.

---

## GREAT AND HOLY SATURDAY

Something strange is happening - there is a great silence on earth today, a great silence and stillness. The whole earth keeps silence because the king is asleep. The earth trembled and is still because God has fallen asleep in the flesh and He has raised up all who have slept ever since the world began. God has died in the flesh and hell trembles with fear.

He has gone to search for our first parent, as for a lost sheep. Greatly desiring to visit those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death, he has gone to free from sorrow the captives Adam and Eve. The Lord approached them bearing the Cross, the weapon that had won Him the victory. At the sight of Him Adam, the first man he had created, struck his breast in terror and cried out to everyone: "My Lord be with you all." Christ answered him: "And with your spirit." He took him by the hand and raised him up, saying: "Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light."

I am your God, who for your sake have become your son. Out of love for You and for your descendents I now by my own authority command all who are held in bondage to come forth, all who are in darkness to be enlightened, all who are sleeping to arise. I order you, O sleeper, to awake. I did not create you to be held a prisoner in hell. Rise from the dead. Rise up, work of My hands, you who were created in My image. Rise, let Us leave this place, for you are in Me and I am in you; together We form only one person and we cannot be separated.

For your sake, I, your God, became your son; I, the Lord, took the form of a slave; I, whose home is above the heavens, descended to the earth and beneath the earth. For your sake, for the sake of man, I became a man without help, free among the dead. For the sake of you, who left a garden, I was betrayed to the Jews in a garden, and I was crucified in a garden.

See on my face the spittle I received in order to restore to you the life I once breathed into you. See there the marks of the blows I received in order to refashion your warped nature in my image. On my back see the marks of the scourging I endured to remove the burden of sin that weighs upon your back. See My hands, nailed firmly to a Tree. I slept on the Cross and a sword pierced my side for you who slept in paradise and brought forth Eve from your side. My side has healed the pain in yours. My sleep will rouse you from your sleep in hell. The sword that pierced Me has sheathed the sword that was turned against you.

Rise, let us leave this place. The enemy led you out of the earthly paradise. I will not restore you to that paradise, but I will enthrone you in heaven. I forbade you the tree that was only a symbol of life, but see, I who am Life itself am now one with you. I appointed cherubim to guard you as slaves are guarded, but now I make them worship you as God. The throne formed by cherubim awaits you, its bearers swift and eager. The bridal chamber is adorned, the banquet is ready, the eternal dwelling places are prepared, the treasure houses of all good things lie open. The Kingdom of Heaven has been prepared for you from all eternity.

-Anonymous Ancient Homily