

SS. PETER & PAUL

Lorain, OH | www.OrthodoxLorain.org | (440) 277-6266

Rev. Joseph McCartney, Rector

Cell Phone: (440) 668 - 2209 ~ Email: frjoseph@me.com ~ Home Phone: (440) 654-2831

Gospel Reading ~ Matthew 25:31-46
Epistle Reading ~ 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2
Apostles of the 70 Archippus & Philemon, and Martyr Apphias

This Week at a Glance

Thurs, Feb. 23rd

**9:30 am - Moleben for
Those Suffering from
Drug & Alcohol
Addiction**

Sat, Feb. 25th

4:00 pm - Great Vespers

Sun, Feb. 26th

**9:00 am - The Hours
9:30 am - Divine Liturgy
Rite of Forgiveness**

Gospel Meditation

Now we have come to the Gospel about the Last Judgment. It determines everything, for everyone and forever. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal" (Mt. 25:46). Here everything is summed up; everything is clear, unchangeable, eternal. Here God's Truth meets with God's Mercy, and God's Love with the Wisdom of God.

We walked away from Christ's manger from which we received the spirit of adoption (sonship). On the Day of the Lord's Circumcision, our New Year, we consciously dedicated ourselves to the service of the Lord in the coming year. On the day of the Lord's Baptism, we received the special Grace to do God's will. But on the very first steps of our new life we did not stand fast, but yielded to temptation and sinned. It is not without reason that the very first Sunday after the Baptism called to us: "Repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Mt. 4:17). And with all the subsequent Gospels the Holy Church has been teaching us how to repent. She has given us wonderful images of repentance: Zacchaeus changed his whole life. The Publican was justified by his prayer: "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Lk. 18:13). And the Prodigal Son returned to his Father. All this is true, all this happened, and it has been repeated thousands of times throughout the history of Christ's Church. And all of this exists right now; all this is possible for both you and me.

And the picture of the Last Judgment, which might startle us, does not disrupt our cycle of Gospel readings. It gives them meaning, makes them more exact, sums up for us all that was before in the Church and all that will be further on. After all, to be placed at the right side of the King and to hear His voice: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom" (Mt. 25:34) — this is the purpose of our life. But we rarely think about this and often forget it.
 - *Archbishop Andrei (Rymarenko, 1893-1978)*

Envelope Drive

The 3rd annual envelope drive for the Russian Food Festival has started. The goal is to raise \$1500.00 by August to cover costs for necessary paper items, cleaning supplies and food. So far \$235.00 has been collected. Every week 12 new envelopes marked with specific & varying amounts will be tacked to the bulletin board along with a visual gauge marking our progress. The idea is to take an envelope (or 2), sign your name to it and add the designated contribution. You can then put your envelope in the collection basket, put it in the slot at the candle desk OR directly hand it to Donna or Olga, in which they will put it in the basket. Your donation will be recorded and applied toward your annual donation. Every week the envelopes will be tallied and the following Sunday the amounts will be added to the gauge on the bulletin board so that everyone can see our progress. Feel free to take an envelope and donate as often as your wish.

Memorial Saturday Liturgies

Saturday March 11th and Saturday March 18th are Memorial Liturgies. Which means they are held to commemorate our departed relatives, and friends. If you would like your relatives commemorated for these liturgies fill out a form and turn it in, or email Fr Joseph. Please note that due to the large number of commemorations, prosphora breads will not be returned with you lists.

Lenten Pirogi Dinners

This year we will be offering Lenten Pirogi Dinners to the public each Friday of Lent. This is a great fundraiser for the church and need manpower to make it successful. If you would like to help make the pirogies, please see Midge Liles. There is a sign up sheet on the bulletin board for volunteers to bake for the Lenten dinners, and volunteers also to make a Lenten soup which will be sold by the

Commemoration Lists

Many people have asked me about the lists taken to the front of the church and the breads that are returned. It is a common practice to make commemorations during the liturgy for our departed loved ones. St John of San Francisco says that there is not greater good we can do for the departed than to have them commemorated at the liturgy. Your commemorations are taken out of a small loaf of bread called prosphora, and the loaf is returned. Unfortunately, many parishes in America do not do this due to the large number of commemorations and because making the small loaves is a very time consuming process. I feel its important to keep these traditions alive, so I started doing it. If you would like your loved ones commemorated, fill out a list in the back of church (by the bulletins) and bring it up to the table on the left side of the church. It is normal to include a small donation with your list to help cover the cost of bread making supplies and time, and in thanks for the prayers being offered. At the end of the service, your list and bread can be picked up on the window sill. Please not that these breads are not returned for Memorial Saturday Liturgies (because of the large number of commemorations), or

Sunday of the Prodigal Son

The icon of the Sunday of the Last Judgment incorporates all of the elements of the parable from Matthew 25:31-46. Christ sits on the throne and before him the Last Judgment takes place. He is extending his hands in blessing upon the Theotokos on his right, and John the Baptist on his left. Seated on smaller thrones are the Apostles, represented by Peter and Paul, a depiction of the words of Christ in Matthew 19:28.

Proceeding from the throne are the scrolls pronouncing the judgment upon the sheep and the goats. The faithful are received with the words that are written on the scroll to the right of Christ the Judge, "Come, you blessed of My Father, and inherit the kingdom" (v. 34). The scroll on the left condemns the unfaithful with the words, "Depart from me you cursed, into the everlasting fire" (v. 41).

Before the throne, the progenitors of the human race, Adam and Eve, bow before Christ. (2.) In the center of the icon is the Archangel Michael. He is holding the scales of judgment and is surrounded by the books that contain the works of each person (Revelation 20:11-13). (3.) Also shown are the angels with trumpets announcing the return of Christ and signaling the resurrection of the dead and the commencement of the Last Judgment (I Thessalonians 4:16-17).

To the left of the Archangel are both the living and the dead who are approaching the throne and Christ the judge. Whereas Adam and Eve are representative of all of humanity, this part of the icon shows that both the living and the dead will stand before Christ.

At the bottom right of the icon is the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and the demons, and also for those who are not found worthy to inherit the Kingdom of God.

The icon offers a clear image of the theme of judgment with Christ on His throne, the Archangel with the scales and books, and the anticipation of the sentence of everlasting punishment for the unrighteous and the reward of eternal life for the righteous.

