

Weekly Schedule of Services

Saturday: 4pm Great Vespers

This ancient prayer service assists in preparing us for the most sacred of services, the Sunday Liturgy. *New:* Stay after as we preach through St. Paul's Letter to the Romans.

Sunday: 9:30am Divine Liturgy

This is the central day of the Christian week, where we worship our great God in holy array, and receive the most sacred Body and Blood of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Coming Soon Wednesday: 6:30pm Prayer and Essentials
Join us as we explore and discuss the Core Teachings of Christian Faith and Practice.

Monday through Friday: 8am Morning Prayer

Come join us in prayer for our Church family and community as she begins her day. Stay for morning coffee!

Upcoming Major Feasts

Tuesday, August 6: The Transfiguration of our Lord

Thursday, August 15: Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos

-St. Tikhon's Monastery will be celebrating St. Anna's Day with an Akathist, procession, and anointing on Sunday, July 21 at 2:00pm.

-St. Tikhon's Patronal Feast will be on Tuesday, August 13 at 9:00am.

-Local Announcement: VNA Hospice & Home Health will hold a *Community Health Fair*, August 7, from 10am-2pm. Screenings such as vision, blood pressure, stroke, and more will be provided at no charge. For information call 570-383-5180.

Find Peace of Soul at

All Saints Orthodox Church

211 Willow Avenue, Olyphant, PA 18447

www.allsaintsolyphant.org

Fr. Joshua Schooping - Parish Priest - 570-489-0942



Sunday, July 21, 2019

Holy Prophet Ezekiel

Epistle: Romans 10:1-10
Gospel: Matthew 8:28-9:1

Biblical, Sacramental, Patristic, Christ-centered, and Spirit-filled, *All Saints Orthodox Church* is a community of Orthodox Christians seeking to know and live the Gospel by putting on the Mind of Christ and acquiring the Holy Spirit. Discover who you are in Christ with practical teachings to uplift and transform your mind, open and expand your heart, and experience the freeing, awesome, and intimate presence of God in your soul.

Pastoral Reflection

Unconditional love is actually radical. It is unlike anything on earth. It even violates the typical laws of logic we normally use to understand the world and people around us. Jesus is the Personal, physical, human Incarnation of unconditional Love, and so we might ask then, How much of Him do we really see? The very perception of Jesus is limited when love is narrow and conditional. Our inability to love as God loves can even make God's love appear remote, impossible. But God's love is literally boundless and unending, even towards His enemies. Thus, to tame His love and make it intelligible we may reduce God's love to sentimentality. But God's love is infinite and far beyond mere sentiment. When we start to glimpse, even dimly, the enormity of God's love, we draw back. We may even fear this uncompromising Love and seek to hide ourselves in more comfortable judgments and feelings. Yet His Cross reveals His eternal disposition to give Himself fully, totally, and without reservation *for you*. The freedom in this Love is overwhelming, for it is a Love that touches even the parts of ourselves that we hate and hide. God embraces our deepest fear and shame, draws them and us into His healing Light. But sadly, rather than expose ourselves to His loving light we often hide ourselves away, cloaked in an impenetrable shell, or elaborate defense mechanisms. Maybe we try to make ourselves worthy. But it is God's Love that *makes us* worthy, and only by faith do we receive this Love. Trusting Him, in vulnerability we are transformed by His unconditional love.

Keep Praying

“Without uninterrupted prayer we cannot draw near to God.” -St. Isaac the Syrian

Wisdom, Let us Attend

The Church Fathers are a repository of living wisdom. One such Church Father is St. Seraphim of Sarov (19th Century). Writing spiritual instructions to both laymen and monks, he taught:

Faith... is the beginning of our union with God. One who truly believes is a stone in the temple of God.

One way to understand this is by looking first at the more general phenomenon of faith. Faith is the way or means of interacting with invisible realities such as love, peace, and wisdom, but also fear, law, and judgment. Of course, invisible realities act on us without our knowledge or awareness, but in order for us to grasp them, to interact with them, then we must touch them by some means, and that means is called *faith*. Faith is the organ of reception of the invisible. St. Paul defines faith as *confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see*, explaining that *by faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible*. In other words, undergirding visible reality are the invisible realities causing their existence, and faith is the *assurance* of this, the *confidence* that they are real, and the means by which they are *understood*. Therefore, returning to St. Seraphim, *faith is the beginning of our union with God* because faith is the organ which receives the unseen God. But he quotes St. James: *faith without works is dead*, thus illuminating the difference between living and dead faith. Dead faith is mere mental assent to a truth, such as when we agree with a doctor that exercise is good and yet refuse to exercise. That is dead, fruitless faith. Actual faith has energy that produces fruit, or works. St. Seraphim states, *the works of faith are: love, peace, long-suffering, mercy, humility, rest from all works, bearing of the cross, and life in the Spirit. Only such faith can be considered true. True faith cannot be without works*. In short, these are the works of faith, not faith “plus” works. True faith necessarily produces such works as from within itself. Thus it is not a matter of adding works to faith, but of authentic and therefore work-producing faith. This is why faith truly is the beginning of union with God. By faith we receive Him, and in union with God His Life now in us produces love, peace, and the rest.