

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!

Announcements

Major Feasts

Tuesday, August 6: The Transfiguration of our Lord

Thursday, August 15: Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos

Upcoming: Due to the accident, please come Wednesday evening (Aug 7) at 6pm for the Akathist Hymn: *Glory to God for All Things!*

A very big THANK YOU to Will and Debbie Semon for their financial assistance with the needed cutting and removal of a tree at All Saints Cemetery!

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, August 4, 2019
Seven Sleepers of Ephesus

Epistle: Romans 15:1-7
Gospel: Matthew 9:27-35

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

One of the things most noticeable about the saints, even the greatest saints, is that they ever confess that they are sinners. At no point do we hear of a saint that he proclaims his own righteousness. As holy as they are, with lives lived among miracles of healing, insight, and prophecy, they never proclaim their own goodness. Likewise, for us, as we prepare for Communion, and just before we receive the Body and Blood of the Lord, we confess that we ourselves are the “first” among sinners, and we pray God’s mercy, that He forgive us our sins “voluntary and involuntary, of word and of deed, committed in knowledge or in ignorance,” and then we ask that *He* make us “worthy to partake without condemnation” of Christ’s most pure Mysteries, both for remission of sins and life everlasting. At that incredible moment we are standing humbly in the very presence of Christ, and yet what this tells us is that we never approach or stand before God clothed in our own righteousness. In other words, God is not waiting for you to be good enough, holy enough, pure enough, disciplined enough, or any other kind of enough. God is not waiting for you to measure up. We approach God through grace, but we only receive this grace by humbly acknowledging our inability to be good enough, and humbly receiving that He is good enough. We cannot prove to God that we are worthy; it is God who makes us worthy. It is He who makes us clean, not we ourselves; it is He who makes us whiter than snow, not we ourselves; it is He who makes us to hear joy and gladness, not we ourselves; it is He who creates in us a clean heart, and renews a right spirit within us. Not we ourselves, it is God who saves!

Keep Praying

“Ceaseless prayer soon heals the mind.” -A Desert Father

Wisdom, Let us Attend

The Church Fathers are a repository of living wisdom. One such Church Father is St. Gregory of Nyssa (4th Century). Writing about the nature of the human soul, he taught:

The soul obviously has a great impulse of desire and another great impulse of anger. We see each of these impulses, which belong to us as human beings, producing many different results by their combined activity.

One way to understand this is by considering our everyday experience: we either like something or we don’t. Sometimes neutral, for the most part we see something and we either like or dislike it. It can be little things, a cup of coffee, or big things like death. When we like something, we are attracted, and probably want more. And when we don’t like something, we are unhappy and will endeavor to at least avoid it. St. Gregory is thus talking about something very profound, because these two impulses, desire and anger, drive a multitude of other responses and actions, many “*in which the desiring faculty takes the lead, and again many which arise because of anger.*” It is these two responses which dominate our lives. Push and pull, like and dislike, compliment and revile, crave and avert, love and hate, and so on. And out of these two we often weave yet more complex responses. We like sleep so we want more; we don’t want to go to work so we hit the snooze button; we have to get to work because we want to pay for our bed. Thus we want to sleep but we don’t want to sleep; we want to work but we don’t want to work. St. Maximus describes our relationship to this process as a type of slavery. Our will is ruled by these contrary impulses. The will is only free, however, through the Cross, which is to say the will is only free when it accepts its death in Christ. By accepting its death it allows Christ, the only truly free Being, to manifest His freedom in the soul, liberating the will from the play of impulses. If a person tries to use his own will instead of Christ’s to arrest the passions, then he can never escape or experience the freedom offered by Christ. When we lay our will down, despite the passions’ tug of war, then we immediately place ourselves in reference to Christ, and allow His superior freedom to set us free.