

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.

Upcoming: 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.

Wednesday: 6:30pm Prayer and Essentials

After praying an Akathist, join us as we explore and discuss the Core Teachings of Christian Faith and Practice through the Scriptures and the Church Fathers.

Monday through Friday: 8am Morning Prayer

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

Announcements

Regular Wednesday evening Choir Rehearsal is at 7pm

Please let Fr. Joshua know about any upcoming birthdays or anniversaries, or about those who are sick or travelling and may need prayer.

Please be in touch with Fr. Joshua for your *regular* practice of Confession.

Out of respect for the unique wishes of each parishioner, please personally request for pastoral visitation. If unable to make a personal request, the parishioner's directly authorized loved one is encouraged to request for pastoral visitation on their behalf.

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, January 5, 2020
Eve of Theophany

Epistle: 2 Timothy 4:5-8
Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

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

We are created for joy. But joy is not an end in itself. By its nature, joy is always *in* something. Joy always bears relation to some person or object. We find joy in family, friends, beautiful places, precious moments, and meaningful labor. In this way, it is clear that joy is found in our response to things we love. Joy is found in something other than our own feelings of joy. Certainly, the quality of our joy will be very low if we look for it in persons, places, situations, or things that do not endure. If we are honest, we do not want passing joy; we want permanent, enduring, and endless joy. We want infinite joy. Tragically, then, if all our joy is sought in things that do not endure, then we will end up utterly joyless and cut off from joy. We will be searching among shallow, fast-drying wells for bottomless water. And so, since nothing of the world endures, it becomes all too clear that nothing in the world can provide the joy that we long for. It all turns to sorrow. Everything in this world is temporary and passing. The problem is, then, that we are created for this infinite joy, but we cannot find it in any permanent way in any created person or finite object. If we seek to do this, we will either settle for less, that is, an idol, or set ourselves up for failure and frustration. What is the solution? God in all His holiness and glory. The angels resound: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!” The holiness of God is His incomparable, perfect, all-wonderful nature. God’s glory is the shining forth of His holiness. O Wonder! God’s holiness is eternally shining forth gloriously, and as such is an endless source of infinite joy. We are created to find unending joy in glorifying God. David sings: “Glory in His holy name!” Let us then glorify God our Savior: our chief delight!

Keep Praying

“I search for God not only to believe in Him, but also to see something of Him.” -St. Augustine

Wisdom, Let us Attend

The Church Fathers are a repository of living wisdom. One such Church Father is St. Cyril of Alexandria (5th Century). He taught:

As our truly great and all-holy High Priest, Christ appeases the wrath of His Father by His prayers, sacrificing Himself for us.

Misunderstanding the Scriptures and the Church Fathers, many people draw faulty conclusions about who God is. Not knowing God’s holiness, they not only end up misunderstanding His nature, they end up misunderstanding His saving work on the Cross. This is why it is so important to take the trouble to understand what the Church has received and taught, because even today many people misunderstand and thereby misrepresent God. One ends up worshipping a caricature, if not a falsehood, and thereby denies the faith, if not explicitly, then implicitly. On the one hand, this makes it easier for error to spread, which attracts heretics and repels those who are seeking to find “the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” That is why it is vital to understand what the Fathers taught about God’s *wrath*, and about how Christ’s death *appeases it*. Many people are even ashamed of these doctrines, and so it is all the more important to have a right understanding, so as to strengthen the faithful and resist error. St. Cyril continues, saying *the torments of the ungodly are called the ‘wrath of God.’* In other words, *punishment is often called ‘wrath’ in the Holy Scriptures.* Clearly, not only does St. Cyril not shy away from the doctrine of God’s wrath against sinners, but neither should we. It is a tragic reality that the ungodly will be met with unending torments, but no one need suffer these! Christ, in Cyril’s words, has appeased the wrath of God, having become a sacrifice for us. Christ bore the punishment for our sins. As St. Philaret of Chernigov also taught of Christ: “By His own will He took upon Himself the guilt of mankind and voluntarily resolved to endure the punishment for it.” Let us not, then, be ashamed that Christ endured on our behalf the consequence of our sin, taking upon Himself the guilt and punishment. Let us not turn away from this sacred mystery of God’s love for His children. *If we think rightly, we will hold that all of Christ’s sufferings happened for us and in our place.*