

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.

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.

Please See Our Lenten Schedule for dates and times of Services

Lenten Services are especially powerful for Spiritual Renewal.

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.

Please let Fr. Joshua know if you would like to have your home blessed.

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



February 23, 2020: The Last Judgment
Hieromartyr Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2

Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46

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

Pastoral Reflection

Having discussed what it means to love people and be holy, and continuing the discussion of what it means to know and pursue God, what then does it mean to *pursue* God? To pursue God means to seek Him actively, not passively, and to not be satisfied with mere head knowledge but rather heart knowledge of, and intimacy with, God. It manifests as a desire for prayer, a desire to be at the Church services in worship of Him. Pursuing God means loving God, and obeying God, and approaching Him by the Paths He has laid out, putting first what He puts first and not prizing the things that are in this world above Him, but rather seeking first His kingdom: “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33). Pursuing God means, quite simply, to desire God, to *want* Him, to want His love, His joy, His peace, His rest, and to taste and see that the Lord is good. Many do not desire God. They go to Church, they say their prayers, but if they were enabled to look into their own heart they would not see any desire for Him. They would sense only coldness towards Him. His Word would not appear to have any relevance, and His commandments of no importance. God’s judgments would seem like distant stones on a far away mountain, there but irrelevant. All pursue what they want, but if we do not want God then we will not pursue God. And if we do not see anything of worth in Him, then let us at least fear, for Christ declares: “Because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth” (Revelation 3:16). Although He calls us by His mercy and draws us by His grace, if we do not pursue Him, if our treasure is not centered in heaven, then everything of value is lost, for all value is centered in Him.

Keep Praying

“Through humility every device of the enemy and every kind of obstacle is destroyed.”
-St. Dorotheos of Gaza

Wisdom, Let us Attend

The Church Fathers are a repository of living wisdom. One such Church Father is St. Gregory Palamas (14th cent.). He taught:

The violation of God’s commandment is the cause of all types of death, both of soul and body, whether in the present life or in that endless chastisement. And death, properly speaking, is this: for the soul to be unharnessed from divine grace and to be yoked to sin.

Sin is the *violation of God’s commandment*. Sin is the inward turning away from the truth, light, and will of God that results not only sinful acts, but also *all types of death, both of soul and body*. The agreement of the will with sin is like the planting of a seed, and when this seed sprouts it produces death as its fruit. Just as an apple seed will produce an apple tree, and not some other kind of tree, so sin will produce death and nothing else. But St. Gregory distinguishes between death of the body and death of the soul. The soul is the energy of life, and the human soul is composed of the actions of thinking, feeling, and willing. What is commonly known is that death of the body is the separation of the soul from the body, but what is less commonly known is that death of soul is the soul’s separation from the Spirit of God. This kind of death can and does happen in this life, and so even though a person walks, breathes, talks, and works, that person can still be spiritually dead. Spiritual death begins in life, and this separation from the Spirit of God is a profound problem. Christ came to restore that connection by granting eternal life to man, solving the problem of man’s death of soul and body. God raises the body at the Last Judgment, but God quickens the soul to life here by the energy of His grace, which reconnects us to Him in faith, Baptism, and Communion. If a soul, however, is not willingly joined to Christ in this life, then the result will be *endless chastisement*. The will requires the energy of life to change its position from being against God to being with God. And so if at death the will is not already joined to God, then the will will have no energy left with which to change position. Thus a connection with God will be impossible, for the will is rendered immobile at death, like a car that has run out of gas, for the turning of the wheel can no longer turn the direction of the car.

of his adoptive mother, Polycarp gave away his possessions and began to lead a chaste life, caring for the sick and the infirm. He was very fond of and close to Saint Bucolus, Bishop of Smyrna. He ordained Polycarp as deacon, entrusting to him to preach the Word of God in church. He also ordained him to the holy priesthood. The holy Apostle John the Theologian was still alive at this time. Saint Polycarp was especially close to Saint John, and sometimes accompanied him on his apostolic journeys. Shortly before his death, Saint Bucolus expressed his wish that Polycarp be made Bishop of Smyrna. When Saint Polycarp was consecrated as a bishop, the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him. Saint Polycarp guided his flock with apostolic zeal, and he was also greatly loved by the clergy. Saint Ignatius the God-Bearer of Antioch (December 20) also had a high regard for him. Setting out for Rome where execution awaited him, he wrote to Saint Polycarp, "This age is in need of you if it is to reach God, just as pilots need winds, and as a storm-tossed sailor needs a port." The emperor Marcus Aurelius (161-180) came to the Roman throne and started up a most fierce persecution against Christians. The pagans demanded that the judge search for Saint Polycarp, "the father of all the Christians" and "the seducer of all Asia." During this time Saint Polycarp, at the persistent urging of his flock, stayed in a small village not far from Smyrna. When the soldiers came for him, he went out to them and invited them in to eat. He asked for time to pray, in order to prepare himself for martyrdom. His suffering and death are recorded in the "Epistle of the Christians of the Church of Smyrna to the Other Churches," one of the most ancient memorials of Christian literature. Having been brought to trial, Saint Polycarp firmly confessed his faith in Christ, and was condemned to be burned alive. The executioners wanted to nail him to a post, but he declared that God would give him the strength to endure the flames, so they could merely tie him with ropes. The flames encircled the saint but did not touch him, coming together over his head in the shape of a vault. Seeing that the fire did him no harm, the pagans stabbed him with a dagger. So much blood flowed from this wound that it extinguished the flames. The body of the hieromartyr Polycarp was then cremated. The Christians of Smyrna reverently gathered up what remained of his holy relics, and each year they celebrated the day of his martyrdom.

*****Hymns at the Divine Liturgy*****

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23: TONE 3

Meatfare Sunday – Sunday of the Last Judgment.

Hieromartyr Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna

Tone 3: Troparion (*Resurrection*)

Let the heavens rejoice!

Let the earth be glad!

For the Lord has shown strength with His arm.

He has trampled down death by death.

He has become the first born of the dead.

He has delivered us from the depths of hell,

and has granted to the world//

great mercy.

Tone 1: Kontakion (*from the Lenten Triodion*)

When Thou, O God, shalt come to earth with glory,

all things shall tremble,

and the river of fire shall flow before Thy judgment seat;

the books shall be opened, and the hidden things disclosed;

then deliver me from the unquenchable fire,//

and make me worthy to stand at Thy right hand, O Righteous Judge!

Tone 3: Prokeimenon

Great is our Lord, and abundant in power, His understanding is beyond measure. (Ps 146/147:5)

v: Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God! (Ps 146/147:1)

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2

But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse. 9 But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. 10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? 11 And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? 12 But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. 13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble. 14 Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? 2 If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2)

Tone 8: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

v: Come, let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to God our Savior! (Ps 94/95:1)

v: v: Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise. (Ps 94/95:2)

Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46

"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 "All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides [his] sheep from the goats. 33 "And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from

the foundation of the world: 35 'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 'I [was] naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' 37 "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed [You], or thirsty and give [You] drink? 38 'When did we see You a stranger and take [You] in, or naked and clothe [You]? 39 'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did [it] to one of the least of these My brethren, you did [it] to Me.' 41 "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 'for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; 43 'I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' 44 "Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' 45 "Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do [it] to one of the least of these, you did not do [it] to Me.' 46 "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." (Matthew 25:31-46)

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! (Ps 148:1) Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Hieromartyr Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna

Saint Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who was "fruitful in every good work" (Col. 1:10), was born in the first century, and lived in Smyrna in Asia Minor. He was orphaned at an early age, but at the direction of an angel, he was raised by the pious widow Kallista. After the death