

Glory to God for all things!

We are currently asking for the prayerful giving of donations towards a sign to be placed in our parking lot. This beautiful and well-crafted sign will help newcomers find us, and also announce things like special services and food sales. The cost of the sign is \$6,200, plus installation fees. We have currently received **\$2,540** in donations towards the sign, with pledges for more, and are asking for additional giving so that we can reach this goal. Any amount is welcome!

## *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.

Monday through Friday: 8am Morning Prayer

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

## *Announcements*

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

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

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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.

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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](http://www.allsaintsolyphant.org)

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



July 19, 2020

Fathers of the 1st Six Ecumenical Councils

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Epistle: Romans 12:6-14

Gospel: Matthew 9:1-8

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

“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse” (Romans 12:14). St. Paul teaches that even towards our enemies we should never speak words which may harm. From our mouths only blessings should come. This is such an overlooked truth. Only blessings should come from our mouths, and yet so often we can be found complaining about people. God teaches that we should never speak ill of a person when they are not around, or speak in any way that places them in a negative light. We should only build people up with our speech, and never tear them down. Some people may say such things as, “I would say this to their face,” and then proceed to speak harshly about them. Cursing, understood broadly, includes all harsh, negative speech. We should *never* speak harshly to or about people, which means neither to others *nor* to their face. We are mostly so quick to criticize, but if we were to be criticized by God we would melt on the spot. The reason is because speech is essentially creative. God created all things through His Word. When we speak ill of another person, sadly we are functioning to create that reality, at least to reinforce it. But when we speak well of people, we labor to create more good and to draw it out and reinforce it. As images of God, we create the world around us through our speech. We can turn a rainy day from gloomy to cozy with our words. We can turn an annoying person or situation into an opportunity for compassion, virtue, and renewed interest, all through our words, and thoughts. Imagine a world in which everyone used their speech to build others up, to transform environments into places of kindness and encouragement, to deal with problems and suffering with positive, uplifting communication. See the good, speak the good, create the good, to build the good; to bless, and not to curse.

### Keep Praying

*“Only when your soul’s powers are pacified through spiritual knowledge can you attain constant prayer.”*  
-St. Nikitas Stothatos

### Wisdom, Let us Attend

The Church Fathers are a repository of living wisdom. One such Church Father is St. Nikitas Stithatos (11th Century). He taught:

*What I am is not at all the same as that which characterizes me... What I am is an image of God manifest in a spiritual, immortal, and intelligent soul... That which characterizes me, and is regal and sovereign, is the power of intelligence and free will.*

The difference between what a human being most fundamentally is, on the one hand, and what characterizes him, on the other, is essential to the spiritual life. It may seem like an obscure point, or perhaps too fine of a distinction, but this distinction is what gives all the value to man, and makes salvation possible. It is the difference between mere reformation and profound transformation. Reform a man and he can deform; transform a man and he can never be the same: he is a new creature! God thus does not call us to reformation, but repentance, transformation, and so not merely changing our thoughts and choices but transforming them through the renewing of our minds. God is not asking us to exchange one list of do’s and don’ts for another list of do’s and don’ts, but to be led and guided by His Holy Spirit. And so if man were merely intelligence and free will, then the change in man could only be the swapping of one set of thoughts and choices for another set of thoughts and choices, and so man would be graded on how well he performed at those new prescriptions. This is not the way of Christ! Christ calls us to entrust ourselves to Him so that we can think with His mind, and choose with His will. God wants to put His Law in our minds, write it on our hearts, abide in our hearts through His Spirit, and share His Kingdom with us by making us co-reign with Him in Christ. That could never happen if it were a matter of intelligence and will, but *consciousness of His divine knowledge, His ineffable wisdom, the vision of supernal realities, the prevision of human realities, the life-quickenning deadness induced by dispassion, and union with Himself, so that we co-reign with Him in the kingdom of God the Father.* This is so much more than that which is accomplished through wit and will. God’s way is not to change the thought to change the man; but to change the man and so change his thought.