

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 *over* **\$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*

Recent Clarification from *Archbishop Mark*: All parishes may continue to fully utilize their worship space while maintaining social distancing from persons not already having regular contact. Once inside the church some persons may need to remove their masks or occasionally remove it for personal reasons. There are HIPAA laws that would forbid us to ask prying personal questions. Also, please keep in mind healthy children are not considered vulnerable or a source of spreading the virus.

- Upcoming Midweek Liturgy for *The Feast of the Transfiguration* of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be August 6 at 9:30am.

-Festal Great Vespers will be August 5 at 6:00pm.

- *The Dormition Fast is August 1 thru 14.*

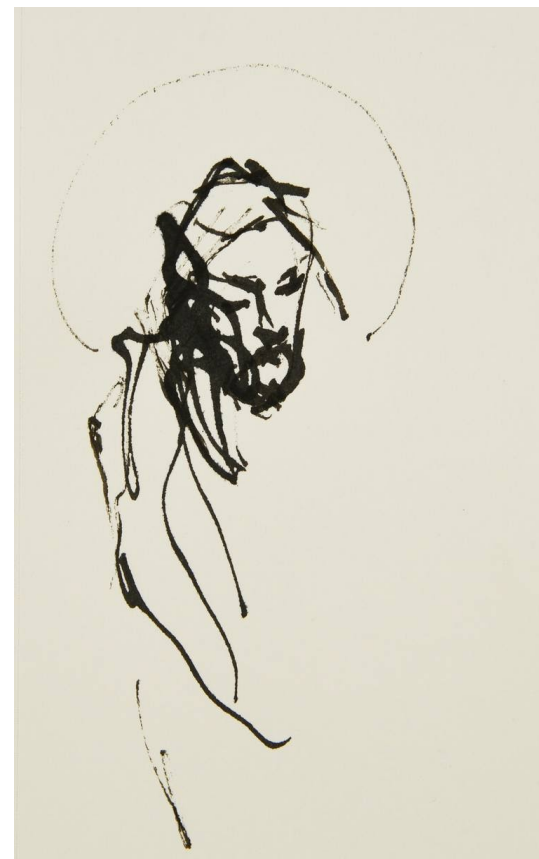
*Find Peace of Soul at*

## *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 26, 2020

St. Jacob Netsvetov of Alaska

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 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*

Faith means entrustment. Faith in God means entrusting oneself to God. It emerges from a recognition of the truth, the beauty, the holiness, the goodness that speaks in the depths of one's heart. Our lives are pervaded by a sense of bottomless need for security, love, peace, and fulfillment. We have an infinite thirst for happiness. Everything in the world that we encounter, however, fails to meet this abiding sense of need. In fact, we are desperate to find lasting, abiding satisfaction. In our deepest spiritual instinct we sense that this gnawing desire cannot be for nothing. Not even in nature does some powerful drive find no corresponding object, and so we sense there must be somewhere this infinite thirst can find actual and not merely theoretical fulfillment. This is where faith comes in. Faith recognizes that the sense of need is the human side of God's call to the heart. Faith is then the act of reaching out to receive God who reaches out to receive us. It is the act by which we entrust our lives to God's power as it holds us. Its power, divine grace, energizes faith's peculiar ability to release the soul from the spell by which all finite objects take hold of the soul's gaze. God, through the instrument of our faith, liberates the soul from its fixation on the world, and thereby frees it from seeking eternal satisfaction in its myriad objects. When we trust God to be our Lord and Savior, then our soul is able to rest even in the midst of action. And so we walk in Christ in the midst of a crooked generation. But it must be recalled that this is God's power working in and through us. He pursues us to give us this gift of Life. He remains with us when we stumble as our Redeemer. He establishes us to remain in Him as our Strength. His Life now is our life eternal. Objects of His love, our faith receives what God accomplishes, receives God Himself.

### *Keep Praying*

*"We should ever meditate on God's name, every moment, in every place, in all we do, as more precious than breath itself." -St. Peter of Damaskos*

### *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; nor is what characterizes me the same as that which relates to my situation; nor is what relates to my situation the same as that which is external to me... That which is external to me is whatever relates to my ambitions in this present life, to my class status and worldly wealth, to glory, honor, prosperity, and exalted rank, or to their opposites: poverty, ignominy, dishonor, and misfortune.*

So many of us sadly waste our lives in the confusion of what we are with what is actually *external* to us. We will think of ourselves as rich or poor, honored or dishonored, high or low, country or city, employed or unemployed, or any number or combination of these. And yet, they are all external to who we truly are. What a tragedy it is that we overlook that we are an image of God and instead wrap ourselves in identities constructed out of what is external to us. What is external to us is constantly ebbing and flowing, rising and falling on the tides of circumstances of nature and providence, and so they form no foundation for identity. And yet if we are exalted in the rising tide of circumstances we feel as if we in ourselves are somehow exalted, and conversely, if we are brought low on the same tides we feel we in ourselves are low. But the truth is, we are not defined by or established on circumstances. The freedom of the Spirit knows nothing of these. This is why St. Nikitas urges: *To know yourself means that you must guard yourself from everything that is external to you; it means respite from worldly concerns and cross-examination of the conscience.* We must constantly resist the urge to fall into false patterns of identity, remaining vigilant in discerning what we are from what is external to us, and also from what characterizes us. In fact, resting in our identity in Christ as an image of God constitutes much of our spiritual labor, for it is the guarding of our freedom in Him. This self-awareness is the ground of authentic humility, for true humility should never feel heavy but rather correlated with freedom. Only in this freedom does godly love arise, for His image in us manifests as a radiation of love.