

May 2016



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# SAINT INNOCENT ORTHODOX CHURCH

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## May 2016 Newsletter

### Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann Christ is risen!

My belief in Christ does not come from the opportunity given to me to participate since earliest childhood in the paschal celebration. Rather, Pascha is made possible, that unique night fills with light and joy and such victorious power in the greeting "Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!" because my faith itself was born from experience of the living Christ. How and when was it born? I don't know, I don't remember. I only know that every time I open the gospel and read about Christ, read his words, read his teaching, I consciously repeat, with all my heart and being, what was said by those who were sent to arrest Christ but who returned to the Pharisees without him: "No man ever spoke like this man" (Jn. 7:46). Therefore what I know first of all is that Christ's teaching is alive, and that nothing on earth can be compared with it. And this teaching is about him, about eternal life, about victory over death, about a love that conquers and overcomes death. I know as well that in a life where everything seems so difficult and tiresome, the one constant that never changes and never leaves is this inner awareness that Christ is with me. "I will not



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leave you as orphans, I will come to You" (Jn. 14:18). And he does come and give the feeling of his presence through prayer, through a thrill of soul, through a joy so incomprehensible, yet so very alive, through his mysterious, but again so certain, presence in church during services and in sacraments. This living experience is always growing, this knowledge, this awareness which becomes so obvious that Christ is here and that his word has been fulfilled: whoever loves Me, "I will love him and manifest myself to him Jn. 14:21). And whether I am in a crowd or alone, this certitude of his presence, this power of his word, this joy of faith in him remains with me. This is the only answer and the only proof.

"Why do you seek the living among the dead? Why do you mourn the incorrupt amid corruption?" All Christianity, therefore, is the experience of faith repeated again and again as if for the first time, through its incarnation in rites, words, music, and colors. To the unbeliever, it may indeed seem like a mirage; he hears only words, he sees only incomprehensible ceremonies, and he understands them only outwardly. But for believers, all of this radiates from within, and not as proof of his faith, but as its result, as its life in the world, in the soul, in history. Therefore the darkness and sadness of Holy Friday is for us something real, alive, contemporary; we can cry at the cross and experience everything that took place in that triumph of evil, treachery, cowardice, and betrayal; we can contemplate the life-bearing tomb on Holy Saturday with excitement and hope. And therefore, every year we can celebrate Easter, Pascha, the Resurrection. For Easter is not the remembrance of an event in the past. It is the real encounter in happiness and joy, with him whom our hearts long ago knew and encountered as the life and light of all light. Easter night testifies that Christ is alive and with us, and that we are alive with him. The entire celebration is an invitation to look at the world and life, and to behold the dawning of the

mystical day of the Kingdom of light. "Today the scent of Spring begins," sings the church, "and the new creation exults..." It exults in faith, in love and in hope.

*This is the day of resurrection,  
Let us be illumined by the feast,  
Let us embrace each other,  
Let its call "brothers" even those that hate us,  
And forgive all by the resurrection,  
And so let us cry: Christ is risen from the dead,  
Trampling down death by death,  
And upon those in the tombs bestowing life.*

***Christ is risen!***

## ***Announcements***

- Thank you to all those who made our Holy Week and Pascha beautiful and joyful.
- On Sunday, May 8<sup>th</sup> we will serve the Radonitza Panikhida after the Liturgy. All are welcome to write down the names of your loved ones who have reposed in the Lord so that we may pray for them.
- Fr. Theophan will be giving a slide presentation about his trip to Mt. Athos at Holy Cross Orthodox Church on Sunday May 15<sup>th</sup> at 1pm. All are welcome.
- The Parish Council is scheduled to meet on Thursday May 12<sup>th</sup> at 6pm.
- We have an iTunes podcast "Sparks among the Stubble" and a YouTube channel where our homilies and other classes are posted.

## ***Many Years!***

<i>Birthdays</i>	8	Paul Tutchter
	10	Lee Olson
	11	Petru Luca
	11	Igor Osobov
	13	Olha Tsarykovska
	16	Susan Kehayes
	16	Meg Croft
	22	Nicholas Dorogy
	28	Mose Williams

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Anniversaries

2	Paul and Kimberly Guest
17	Radu and Daniela Malcoci
25	Petru and Carmen Luca
26	Michael and Benita Muth

## The Hours of Pascha

*It is traditional to sing the Hours of Pascha during Bright Week in place of the Hours, Compline, Midnight Office and Morning and Evening Prayers.*

Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Amen.

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling on death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life. (Thrice)

Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ, let us adore the Holy Lord Jesus, the only sinless One. We worship Thy Cross, O Christ, and Thy holy Resurrection we praise and glorify; for Thou art our God, and we know no other than Thee; we call on Thy Name. O come all you faithful, let us worship Christ's holy Resurrection. For behold, through the Cross joy has come to all the world. Ever blessing the Lord, let us praise His Resurrection. By enduring the Cross for us He destroyed death by death. (Thrice)

**Hypakoe:** Forestalling the dawn, the women with Mary came and found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre, and heard from the Angel: Why seek among the dead, as if He were a man, Him Who lives in everlasting light? Behold the grave-clothes. Run and tell the world that the Lord is risen, and has slain death. For He is the Son of God Who saves mankind.

**Kontakion:** Though Thou didst descend into the grave, O Immortal One, yet didst Thou destroy the power of hell, and didst rise again

as Conqueror, O Christ our God, saying to the myrrhbearing women, Rejoice! And giving peace to Thine Apostles, and offering to the fallen resurrection.

**Troparion:** In the grave bodily, in hell with the soul as God, in Paradise with the thief, and on the throne with the Father and the Spirit wast Thou Who fillest all things, O Christ the Infinite.

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit...**

How life-giving, how much more beautiful than Paradise, and truly more resplendent than any royal palace, proved Thy Tomb, O Christ, the Source of our resurrection.

**... Now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.**

Rejoice! Sacred and divine abode of the Most High. For through thee, O Mother of God, joy is given to those who cry: Blessed art thou among women, O spotless Lady.

**Lord, have mercy. (40 times)**  
**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,**  
**now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.**

More honourable than the Cherubim, and incomparably more glorious than the Seraphim; thou who in virginity didst bear God the Word; thee, true Mother of God, we magnify.

Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us. Amen.

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling on death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life. (Thrice)

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## Raising Martyrs

*A recent Pastor's column I wrote for the Monroe County Reporter.*

Recently, I watched a short documentary on the "Children of ISIS" put out by PBS. The Islamic State (ISIS), for those of you who do not know, is a jihadist group that has arisen in the Middle East which is notorious for its brutality against Christians and other Muslims.

In the documentary you could see (Iraqi and Syrian) children being trained for Jihad. The young boys crawled through mud, under barbed wire, they trained in hand-to-hand combat and with weapons, and they even participated in killing. The young boys, some as young as 8 years old were being raised to be lethal soldiers for the Islamic State. The results of the training are that the young boys will become young men who know how to fight and what they are fighting for. Some of them will be suicide bombers and others will be on the front lines of the war against the West. I disagree with their religious ideology and methodology but I also feel it is important to learn from our enemies. In particular I was impressed with the focus and attention that was put into these children to ensure that they would have a clear identity as soldiers of the Islamic State.

While watching the documentary I couldn't help but think about my child and our training of Christian children in the United States. We certainly are not training our children to be soldiers in a fight for survival or to establish a religious state. As Christians we obviously wouldn't train our children to brutally dismember our enemies. However, this begs the question, as Christians, what exactly are we training our children for? What effort are we putting into our youth to give them a clear identity as soldiers in Christ's army?

The statistics show that mainline Christianity is in decline especially among the younger generation. It would be easy to launch into an attack on weak youth programs, the decline of our culture, and Sunday sports as

reasons why our youth are weak in the faith or leaving the faith. However, in modern Christianity I think there is a bigger issue: we are surrounded by a numbing comfort that has lulled us to sleep. This may be a controversial statement but it has always been known that prosperity and comfort produce laxity. Comfortable, well fed and well entertained people do not make good Christians.

Where do you derive your identity from? Investigate, where is your time and treasure? Is most of your life focused on building an earthly kingdom? Do you actually, regularly, with discipline, pray, read the scriptures, go to church (yes this has always been a very important part of the Christian faith), or help those who are less fortunate? "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also....You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6). We do not give our children clear Christian identities because we ourselves do not have clear Christian identities.

We live in scary times. Some of us are raising our children in the way we would have them live their lives as conscientious and confessing Christians. Christians who are ready to die for their faith because it is the center of the family life and identity. Some of us are aware that we may be the next generation that is asked to lay down our lives as we follow our Lord to the Resurrection, through the Cross. Whether we are diligent or not one fact remains clear, ISIS really believes what it believes and is training its children accordingly.

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Pascha Great and Holy Pascha! <b>1pm Agape Vespers</b> <i>followed by the Pascha Party!</i>	2	3	4 No Fast  6pm Paschal Vespers	5  1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	6 No Fast	7  5pm Confession 6pm Great Vespers
8 9:40 Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Radonitza Panikhida 12:45Agape	9	10	11  6pm Daily Vespers	12  1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry 6pm Parish Council	13	14  5pm Confession 6pm Great Vespers
15 9:40 Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape 1pm Athos talk at Holy Cross	16	17	18  6pm Daily Vespers	19  1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	20	21  5pm Confession 6pm Great Vespers
22  9:40 Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	23	24	25  6pm Daily Vespers	26  1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	27	28  5pm Confession 6pm Great Vespers
29  9:40 Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	30  Memorial Day	31				

*Tentative June 2016*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	3	4 6pm Great Vespers with Fr. Seraphim Joa
5 9:40 Hours 10am Divine Liturgy w/ Fr. Seraphim Joa 11:45am Agape	6	7	8	9 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	10	11 6pm Great Vespers with Fr. Daniel Talley
12 9:40 Hours 10am Divine Liturgy w/ Fr. Daniel Talley 11:45am Agape	13	14	15	16 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry 6pm Parish Council	17	18 5pm Confession 6pm Vigil for Pentecost
19 Pentecost 9:40 Hours 10am Divine Liturgy Kneeling Vespers 12:30pm Agape	20	21	22 No Fast 6pm Daily Vespers	23	24 No Fast	25 5pm Confession 6pm Great Vespers
26 9:40 Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape 12:30pm Bible Study	27	28 6pm Great Vespers for the Apostles Peter and Paul	29 9am Divine Liturgy for Peter and Paul	30		