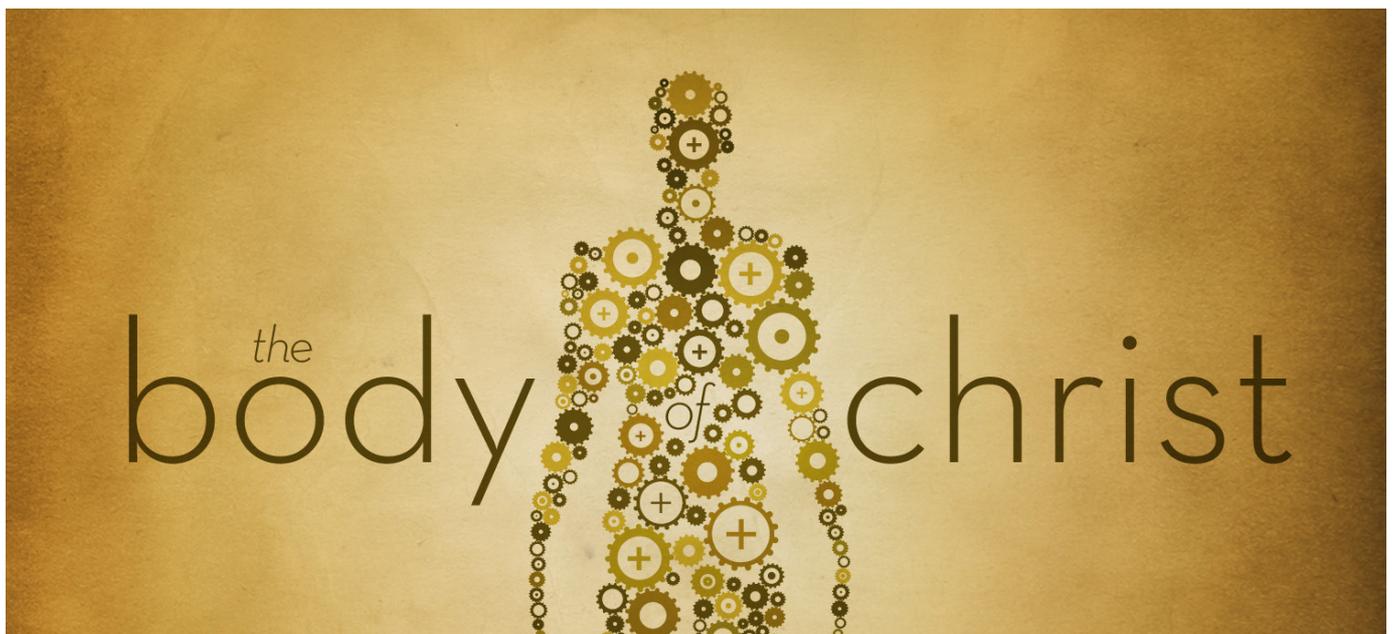


October 2017

SAINT INNOCENT ORTHODOX CHURCH

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER AND CALENDAR



Giving of Ourselves

In the fall of 2009, my wife and I visited St. Innocent Orthodox Church for our first time. That summer we were looking for a parish to be placed in after I graduated seminary. By God's grace, we quickly led into a dialog with St. Innocent Church. The parish flew us down for our "interview" and a gracious introduction to the hospitality of St. Innocent Church.

On Sunday, October 11, 2009, I gave the sermon at the Divine Liturgy. Like a good seminarian, I wrote my sermon out in narrative form and delivered it to the best of my abilities. I remember preaching from the middle of the church and losing my voice a little as a foretaste of many future allergy seasons in Macon. The Epistle of that particular Sunday was 2 Corinthians 9:6-11 (please take the time to read this passage). Here is the slightly edited sermon:

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Christ is in our midst! In today's epistle, the Apostle Paul tells us the universal spiritual principle that we reap what we sow and that God loves a cheerful giver. If we sow sparingly we will reap sparingly. It is easy to limit this passage to a sermon on tithing but what I would like to talk about today is something that is harder than giving money, giving of ourselves.

Christianity is a religion built on giving. St. John relates that God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son. Jesus gave his life on the Cross. The Apostles gave their entire life to the cause of spreading the Gospel message. The gift of God was not a momentary financial transaction but rather He gave totally of Himself to the point of death on a Cross. He gave his precious

lifeblood so that our sins could be forgiven. Not only did Christ give His life but he gave it for a world which doesn't always appreciate it. This is why Christ is the ultimate example of giving.

In our culture, we have a transactional consumer mentality. We give money for products. When we want something or need something we go and we get it. One example of consumer mentality that we take for granted is when we go out and eat. The process usually goes like this. We get home from work and we are tired, we don't want to cook, so we look up a local restaurant with food that we like and we go, sit down, order from a server and eat our meal. When we have eaten enough we pay, get up and leave. No cooking, no work and no dishes to wash a very relaxing experience. There is nothing wrong with going out to eat once in a while. The problem is that sometimes we, consciously or subconsciously, approach the Church as though it were a restaurant.

In the Church, the consumer mentality looks like this. We get off from a long week of work, or whatever, we desire some spiritual food and fellowship, so we go to Church, the Priest serves a sermon and the Eucharist, we pay a little money and there is some fellowship and then we leave and go home. No real investment, no work, a relaxing Sunday Church experience. This Church experience is ok once in a while but as members of the Body of Christ, we are called to a lot more.

This is what today's epistle is about. The Apostle Paul states "He, and who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully." What we sow as Christians is the entirety of our lives. We sow our time, our talents and our treasures into the Kingdom of Heaven.

We sow our time when we spend time in prayer, fasting and working to build up Christ's Holy Church. The Church needs our time. If we look at the life of any of the saints we see that they dedicated a lot of time sometimes all of their time building up the Church. This could be time at the bedside of a dying person, time cleaning

the church building, time putting together bulletins, time in prayer praying for the future of this community. The point is that living the Christian life requires us to dedicate at least 10% of our time to God.

After sleep, there are about 110 hours a week and the average Christian spends around 3 hours in Church.

We sow our talents when we use our God-given gifts to build up the Church. The Church needs our talents. We are called to use the gifts that God has given us in our lives to build up the body of Christ. Imagine if Paul never preached; imagine if St. Innocent never translated. The Gospel is clear that we have been given talents that we are called to multiply. If we don't use them and we bury them we will have to answer to God why. On a practical level, the Church needs people with talents to broaden its ministry. The Church is called the Body of Christ, it needs eyes, ears and hands and all the body parts to function the way God created them to.

The Church needs our treasures, our financial support so that it can do work in the community. Many parishes in the US were founded on bingo, or festivals which are a reversal of the role a Church should play in a community. A Church should be self-sustaining and should be able to sow gifts into a city rather than relying on the world to support its existence.

Orthodoxy is very new to this land but we have some good examples of people who were willing to pour their life into the Church and its effect. St. Innocent the patron of this community was one of these people. At a young age of around 26 St. Innocent was already a missionary to Alaska. He mastered six local languages, trained islanders to be carpenters, metalworkers, blacksmiths, bricklayers, and stonemasons, he devised for it an alphabet of Cyrillic letters and translated into that dialect the Gospel according to St. Matthew, as well as the most frequently used prayers and hymn. This took him a lot of time, he used his talent for language and his industriousness and this took financial support from the Russian people.

Let us reflect on our own lives a little.

The spiritual principle is laid out for us. We get what we put into things. The Apostle I state "let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity." This brings up another point. We all serve Christ, when we work for the Christ He rewards us in His own timing. This Church is Christ's, although this community has invested its labor, money and time, this community is Christ's. Giving of time, talents and treasures has to be a voluntary action or our efforts will be worthless in the eyes of God.

Finally, the Scripture is clear that you will know them by their fruits. One question we could ask ourselves is: If St. Innocent Orthodox Church were to disappear tomorrow somehow would anyone notice outside of its members? If the answer is no then there is plenty of work to be done. Our job is to make this a spiritually fertile place. God supplies the ground, the seed, the food and water all we are called to do is tend the garden. This requires some to plant, some to till, some to feed some to water but mostly it requires us to pray for God's increase in our lives because God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Much has changed in these past years. We have grown, developed, and we are even expanding. Yet, the above homily delivered by a new priest in seminary, to a community he did not know, as primitive as it seems to me now, is still a challenge for our community. The last point I made in the sermon above was "If St. Innocent Orthodox Church were to disappear tomorrow, would anyone notice outside of its members?" Perhaps this phrase could also be directed to each member of our parish. If I/you, "member X", were to disappear tomorrow, outside of my physical presence at church, would there be any effect on the mission and ministries of the parish? May God bless us to each work as a body for the upbuilding of the Church.



ST. INNOCENT'S RULES FOR MISSIONARY WORK

- (1) Pray, pray, pray
- (2) Conversion comes from God, not the evangelist
- (3) The missionary is only a tool in God's hands
- (4) Think before doing, do not be negligent
- (5) Love your work and those to whom you are preaching
- (6) Preach to their hearts, not their minds, from your heart
- (7) Keep dogmas strictly, but make necessary allowances for new converts
- (8) Appropriately adjust fasting to the local culture as needed
- (9) Other than Divine Liturgy, church attendance should not be made an absolute duty
- (10) Ancient customs that are non-Christian are not to be ended abruptly and it must be explained that they are only tolerated

(11) Those who are not baptized may attend Divine Liturgy if they are not a threat and if they will benefit.

(12) Do not give gifts to neophytes since this may be a temptation for conversion

(13) Do not make bribes, threats, or promises to induce anyone into baptism

(14) Act in a dignified manner to gain respect of the people

(15) Do your best to win confidence and help them whenever you can so that they see your open heart

(16) When instructing be gentle, pleasant, and simple, and not overbearing or didactic

(17) Listen courteously and attentively and answer questions carefully and kindly

(18) Be especially friendly to those who are not willing accept baptism

(19) "From new converts or neophytes thou shalt not on any account whatsoever demand contributions or donations for the church or any good work; yet thou shalt not refuse, but kindly accept gifts from some such persons as may voluntarily offer anything.-taking care however, to explain on each separate occasion the object of the gift and the use it will be put to, in order that they might not get the idea that God, like their own spirits, demand offerings, or that such gifts are expiatory or propitiatory sacrifices and the like.

(20) Do not require of new converts or those who you are evangelizing contributions and do not enter any commercial transactions with them

(21) Do not meddle in temporal affairs

(22) Keep a diary

(23) Start a primary school for the instruction of children in Catechism, reading etc.

Oleksa, "Report of Archimandrite Ioasaph to the Holy Synod, 1797", Alaskan Missionary Spirituality,

MEN'S RETREAT

On Saturday, October 28th from 10am through 6pm we will be having a Men's retreat at the Dorogy farm. We are asking men to bring a food or drink offering for the group.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- On Sunday the 1st we will serve the Chrismation service at 9:30am.
- St. Innocent's feast day is on the 6th. We will have Vigil Thursday at 6pm and the Festal Divine Liturgy at 9am on Friday the 6th.
- Elena Dorogy is getting married to Alex Berger on Saturday, October 8th.
- On Saturday's after Vespers, we are having our Catechism series - Exploring the Orthodox Christian Faith. All are welcome.
- The parish council is scheduled to meet on the 19th at 7pm. We are meeting at Eric's house.
- The Prayer Group Paraklesis will be served on Tuesday, October 27th at 6pm.
- Confessions are heard every Saturday after Great Vespers or before Sunday Liturgy between 9:15- 9:40am. There is no need to schedule an appointment unless it is outside of the above times.

2018 PLEDGE DRIVE

The 2018 operating expenses pledge drive starts on October 1st. The pledge form can be found on our website and will be sent out. We are asking that people get their pledges for next year's budget in by the end of October. If you have any questions please ask Fr. Theophan of Kimberly Guest.

MANY YEARS!

Birthdays

October 1 Patti Lanier
 11 Linda Tutcher
 14 Victoria Malcoci
 15 Andrew Marble
 21 Juliana Gordy
 22 Chris Wilcox
 22 Alex Duran
 23 Stacey Dorogy
 23 Sarah Marble

Anniversaries

11 Andrew & Kimberly Lloyd

Tentative October 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30am Christation Service 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape Yearly pledge drive	2	3 9am Morning Prayers	4 6pm Daily Vespers 6:45pm Bible Study	5 9am Morning Prayers 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry 6pm Vigil for St. Innocent's Feast	6 9am Divine Liturgy St. Innocent's Feast Day 4pm Wedding Rehearsal	7 4pm Elena Dorogy Wedding 6pm Readers Vespers
8 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	9	10 9am Morning Prayers	11 6pm Daily Vespers 6:45pm Bible Study	12 9am Morning Prayers 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	13	14 10 Church Cleanup 5pm Confession 6pm Great Vespers 7pm Orthodoxy 101
15 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	16	17 9am Morning Prayers	18 6pm Daily Vespers 6:45pm Bible Study	19 9am Morning Prayers 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry 7pm Parish Council	20	21 5pm Confession 6pm Great Vespers 7pm Orthodoxy 101
22 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape Pledges returned	23 Deanery Retreat	24 Deanery Retreat	25 6pm Daily Vespers 6:45pm Bible Study	26 9am Morning Prayers 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	27 6pm Paraklesis	28 10-6pm Men's Retreat
29 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	30	31 9am Morning Prayers				