

Parish News

St. Peter & St. Paul Orthodox Church

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Pastor: Fr. Herman Kincaid, Editor: Shirley Bryar, Digital Strategist: Ervin (Rusty) Mihalko. A quarterly publication concentrating on the events of our church, on the lives of our parishioners, and interesting things in the world. Back copies of previous issues can be viewed in our church library, or on our web site.



SUMMER 2019



Audience with the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem



Clergy Group Photo



We Climbed a Mountain



Jordan River

Historic Trip

His Grace, Bishop Paul led a historic visit to Israel from May 26 to June 6, 2019. It was the first OCA sanctioned visit by one of our bishops.

Our group included those from our church, plus some from our surrounding churches: St. Panteleimons, St. Luke's, St. Joseph's, and Holy Trinity. Some were from Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio.

We were surprised that we also had people from California, Florida, Kansas, and the most southern part of Texas, plus a priest and his wife from Canada.

His Eminence, Archbishop Theophanes of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, greeted us at the airport in Tel Aviv, and then traveled with us for much of our journey. He opened doors for us, as a group, we were able to by-pass crowded sites, such as the Nativity of Our Lord, and the Holy Sepulcher.

Since 1054, all Christians in the Holy Land came under the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem. (Some may ask the question of who is the founder of Jerusalem? The answer is the Apostles.)

The Archbishop made sure the proper sites were seen, and he took care that we were safe, rested, and fed. For example: We were passing through Palestinian neighborhoods on the way to Jacob's Well, during Ramadan when all restaurants were closed. The Archbishop wondered where to take us for lunch. He tried to see if any place would make us something to eat on the bus, but no one would, so he personally bought us Pita Bread, and bananas from a roadside stand.

On a VERY SPECIAL DAY, we were warmly welcomed by His Beatitude, Patriarch Theophilos, III of Jerusalem and given refreshments, and gifts. We also got to visit his chapel and beautiful garden, and saw where he was able to enter church of the Holy Sepulcher. Then we were invited into the home of the Archbishop, where again we were treated to refreshments, and gifts. To quote Bishop Paul, "Our entire group was grateful for the assistance of Archbishop Theophanes to make our pilgrimage a prayerful one."

Our local guide took us to church on Sunday, and on other days to Masada, and we had a fun day at the Dead Sea, and shopped for souvenirs in Bethlehem.



1. Inside the Arch-bishop's home. 2. We received a blessing at the Jordan River.

3. The Archbishop took us to many sites, including one just being excavated.

MISSION STATEMENT: To live and share the good news of Jesus Christ through worship, ministries and service.

VISION STATEMENT: Grow God's family, experience God's transformative love and develop dynamic disciples of Christ.

"Call no man Father"

"Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His Disciples, saying: 'The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore, whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greeting in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, "Rabbi, Rabbi"; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.'" Matthew 23:1-12

Ignoring the context

"Cherry-picking." You may have heard this term before. It often gets tossed around in religious conversations and debates. Essentially, it means that someone picks and chooses particular Bible verses (almost always out of context) to prove their point. Cherry-picking solves nothing. In fact, it often makes things frustrating, because the true answer can never be found. It is important to remember that the Bible is a whole, coherent, connected text. It is not just a compilation of random citations the Apostles thought would make a great read two-thousand years later. As with any words or statements, we cannot simply read Bible phrases in isolation. This Gospel lesson is no exception. We must remember that centuries of Holy Tradition informed proper interpretation of Scripture. If we hope to understand the proper meaning of Christ's words here, we must view them in the proper context.

The context

It was the perfect time for Christ to deliver His final sermon. With the feast of Passover approaching, many people had come into the city. The Jewish scribes and Pharisees, intent on discrediting Jesus as a false prophet and false messiah, tried to use these people for their own aims. Essentially, their goal was to compromise Him in front of a large crowd. To catch Him up in His words and use that as an accusation against Him. When the scribes and Pharisees fail at accomplishing this (again), Christ delivers His message, publicly condemning these men.

Why did Christ rebuke the Pharisees?

We can see clearly why Christ would rebuke the Pharisees and scribes. Their hypocrisy and vain glory make them unfit to serve as models of properly living the Christian life. Why? Because the Pharisees essentially tried to become gods themselves in the eyes of the people. They dole out rules and regulations, and make a show in front of others. Their pride consumes them. And Christ is telling us not to legitimize this sort of behavior. Christ gives us a lesson in humility, using hyperbolic statements (as He often does to prove His points). The full context of the Word here illustrates that Christ did not mean we could literally call no man father or teacher. Otherwise, Matthew would have transgressed Christ's teaching by using the word "father," 37 times within the first 17 verses of his Gospel. Christ would have contradicted Himself as well, for He says the word father 4 times within a couple verses (Matthew 15:4-6). Altogether, the word father is mentioned in the New Testament nearly 400 times, mostly by Christ or His Apostles. How could we possibly interpret Christ's words as literal, given plenty of evidence to the contrary?

Why do the Orthodox still do this?

In the early Church, many of the disciples of Jesus came to view themselves as the spiritual fathers of their flocks (i.e. Saint Paul and his spiritual relationship with the Church of Corinth and with Timothy). The early Christians utilize familial terms (father, son, children, etc.) to illustrate the nature of Christian relationships and stress the closeness and unity of the Body of Christ (Mark 11:10; John 4:12; Acts 7:2; 1 Peter 5:13; 1 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; 1 Corinthians 4:17). The Orthodox merely continue the ancient Tradition of the Church in calling priests Father. By doing this, we acknowledge their sacred office as servants of God and we look to them as spiritual guides, who help continue the work of Christ and preserve the Church in Truth.

Conclusion

John Calvin, one of the earliest leaders of the Protestant Reformation, can sum up everything beautifully for us: "While Paul claims for himself the appellation of father, he does it in such a manner as not to take away or diminish the smallest portion of the honor which is due God. God alone is the Father of all in faith. But they whom he is graciously pleased to employ as his ministers for that purpose, are likewise allowed to share with him in his honor, while, at the same time, He parts with nothing that belongs to Himself." Viewing Biblical phrases in their proper context is essential if we are to continue living the Christian life. In this particular case, the context showed us that Jesus' words, "Call no man father," were not to be taken literally. This removes a substantial weight from our shoulders, and allows us to once again focus on that which is important: becoming closer and closer to God.

AUGUST FEAST DAYS



Transfiguration Icon
by:
Theophanes the Greek
15th C.
Holy Day observed on
8-6.
The meeting of Christ,
standing in a mandorla,
flanked by figures of
Moses, Elijah, Sts.
Peter, James, and John
the Evangelist.

DORMITION FEAST
AUGUST 15



Entrance to Orthodox Church
Once inside you can see
mosaic of the Transfiguration.



The road is so narrow and
twisting that it is closed to
traffic except for official
shuttles. When you get to
the split in the road, go left
to get to the Greek Orthodox
Monastery.



Inside the
compound, you
can enter the
church. Inside
the church.
Beautifully
decorated
Interior with
green enameling around some of the icons.



Notice this back
wall, all are
female Saints.
Also, notice
amulets hanging
from an icon
above the man
on the far right.
Some of us
purchased

female, male, or body part amulets at this
church for those 5 from our church who were
registered, but not able to attend the pilgrim-
age because of health reasons.



Depiction of the Dormition in our
choir loft.



**Courtyard of St. Elias
Church**



There is the
cave of
Melchizedek on
the property
where an all
night vigil is
held every year
on the

anniversary of the Lord's visit to this place
August 6. (It is possible to visit the cave on
other days, but it was locked when we were
there as arrangements had not been made.)
The construction of St. Elias was started in
1859 by a Romanian monk, and is the first
religious structure built by Romanian
Orthodox Christians in the Holyland. Today,
Romanian Nuns still serve here, but it is
under the protection of the Greek Orthodox
Patriarch of Jerusalem.



**Bishop Paul read the
Gospel at every site.**



Bethlehem site of Christ's birth



Our St. P & St. P group on right side. Bishop Paul took this photo.



Taken at Jacob's Well's garden, Israel. Overly friendly cat, or maybe just a hungry one.



Us by our bus



Photo commemorating a friendship forged in being helpful to each other.



Jerusalem, site of Christ's tomb



Fun in the Dead Sea.



We celebrated Divine Liturgy on Sunday at Russian Orthodox Monastery.



Fr. Bartek rode a camel on the shore of the Dead Sea to the delight of all.



After a ride on Sea of Galilee we had a Fish lunch



Special clothing for Holy sites.



The head of the Monastery caught me taking her photo.



At the same time that Fr. Bartek was riding the camel, Fr. Herman was riding a horse, while touring in Pennsylvania. Hey, Priests have to have fun too!



Cana Orthodox Church Exquisite wine tasting.



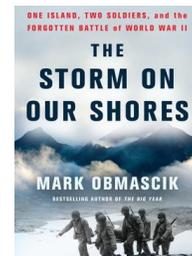
We rode to the top of Masada in this cable car. More on Masada and other sites we saw in future issues



Sunday evening a visit to site of Last Supper.



Mother's Day, the Men cooked and the women enjoyed it.



Alice & John Obmascik got to attend son Mark's book signing. John is recovering from a fall, but Alice still managed to get us new flowers and a new outdoor display. Mark was also featured on 60 Minutes. The book is recommended reading about an unknown part of WWII that happened in Alaska and our church library has a copy.



ANNUAL KERMESH. We celebrate the Name's Day of our church, St. Peter & St. Paul at our Kermesh Annual Cookout. Did you know that in some places in Europe they celebrate their Names Day, more than their birthday, especially in Slovakia, where a good many of our original parishioners in 1932 came from. We usually have a cookout and a different water slide each year for the children, although some years Fr. Herman has been known to take a slide or two. This year the cars got blessed and the food got eaten. Rain cancelled further outdoor activities. We had the usual extra special homemade sides, but this year Arlene Gardner brought huge delicious brats. Missed photographing the guys grilling the meats this year. Too bad, they are grill masters.

CONGRATULATIONS



Olga Evdokimov, Professor of Physics at UIC, had an appointment to the Nuclear Advisory Committee. She claimed it wasn't a big thing, but sure sounds great to us.



Matushka Jessica has a new position at Good Sam Hospital. She has an office job now and better hours, only 3 days a week and no weekends!



Dennis Gurnic on his graduation from College while working full time. He graduated from Joliet Junior College. Also, shown with his mother, Louise and wife Leah.

Ella Kincaid had a part in this years Community Theater production of Peter Pan Jr.



Tom Obmascik got to take an Honor Flight to Washington D.C. on 8-9-19. Tom spent his U.S. Army service: August, 1972 to August, 1975 in Hawaii as a unit armourer. Beautiful surroundings, but hard work!



The miraculous Icon of St. Anna, the Mother of the Holy Virgin Mary visited our church on August 10 for Vespers. The icon was painted in Jerusalem, started weeping at the Russian Orthodox Church in 2004. She was presented to St. Tikhon's Monastery and we thank the Monks who brought her to our Midwest churches to venerate. She continues to work wonders for those who approach with faith.



Congratulations to our First Holy Confession Class: Nathaniel Kincaid, Olivia Havlovic, Cordelia Delgado, Lahyida Kane, Anastasia Prekezes, Eloise Haak, Daniel Demetzsky. Many years! Each one in the group received a gift and always get a special breakfast.



Guess which one is our Priest's kid?



Lilac Trees were in bloom in Israel as were the beautiful pink flowers.



**Archpriest John Matusiak
Pastor Emeritus of St. Joseph
Church, Wheaton, Illinois and
Director of Communications for the
OCA.**

Fell asleep in the Lord on 8-15-19 He is survived by his wife of 45 yrs, Barbara, son Archdeacon Joseph (Nina) and daughter Juliana (Michael), and 5 grandchildren. The Funeral Service for a Priest was held at St. Joseph Church. He was buried at the Wheaton Cemetery. Some of us remember taking a trip to Russia and the Ukraine with Fr. John and his wife Barbara. We remember that it was a very special trip, filled with breath taking sites, holy places, but also, lots of fun and laughter. Fr. John was a dedicated priest, a wonderful iconographer and so knowledgeable about all things of the Orthodox faith. He will be missed. Condolences can be sent to his wife Matushka Barbara Matusiak, 570 Crescent Blvd. Unit 506, Glen Ellen, IL. 60137



John M. Bogdalik was a life-long member of our church. He Fell asleep in the Lord on May 19, all services held at our church. He was an Army Veteran of the Korean War. Husband of Lillian, father of Pamela (Mike) Ryan, and Christine (Mark) Gloyeske, grandfather of Dylan, Ivan, Devin, and Nika. On a personal note, he is remembered for carrying out a fellow parishioner, (piggy-back out of the woods at a church picnic) who had sprained an ankle.) John, Lil and I called it his "Knight in Shining Armour event." The 3 of us then got home by hitch-hiking. The really nice man who gave us a ride, took us all the way home.

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