

PARISH BULLETIN
ST. MARK ORTHODOX CHURCH
JULY 16, 2017 TO AUGUST 26, 2017

St. Mark Orthodox Church
400 West Hamlin Road
Rochester Hills, MI
48309

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Visit our parish website at <http://stmarkrochester.org>.

PRAYER LIST UPDATES

Newly Departed: **Dwight** – father of Andrew Wassell’s friend; **Kathleen** – former Chicago area parishioner of Fr. Andrew; **Leonard** – Maureen Gentry’s co-worker’s father; **Tamara** – Egor Malysh’s mother; **Deborah Astor**; **Stephanie** – Yavornitzky friend; **Andrew Cvercko** – Yavornitzky friend, Ohio FOCA Camp founder

Other prayers:

His Grace Bishop Paul – recovering from knee surgery; **Michael** – Joyce Loria’s son, glandular cancer; **Mary** – Mary McDevitt and Julie Krohta’s mother, gall bladder surgery complications; **George** – Gerry Wenson’s brother, surgery for perforated colon; **Cameron** – friend of Michael Thornton, lyme disease and/or meningitis; **Mary Ann** – Irene Bokas’ sister, heart attack; **Harold** – Amy Wassell’s father, bladder cancer, surgery; **Maureen Gentry** – recovering from shoulder surgery; **Kee** – Dan Drahushak’s co-worker, cancer worsening; **Anna** – Ann Prochko’s great granddaughter, leukemia; **Vivian** – Jan Pravlochak’s sister, recovering from hip surgery; **Rich** – Jan Pravlochak’s brother in law, liver cancer; **Kim** – Maureen Gentry’s co-worker, breast cancer; **Linda** – Julie Kozlowski’s sister, fall, broken ribs; **Archpriest Leonty (Leo) Copacia** – several falls, bad arthritis and pain, in re-hab; newly Baptized and Chrismated **Emmanuel Gialanella**; **Julie and Brian Hetrick and newborn Logan Riley Hetrick**; **John Whitmore and Brittany Gniewek** on their marriage July 16th

THE ADORNMENT CORNER

As a result of our recent on-going appeal regular contributions to the icon fund are being received. **Please begin or continue to be a participant.** We have managed to keep pace with the pay-outs to date, and are able to meet the next payment. However, we must remain faithful in our contributions for the icons because the funding process for the next section will begin all over again. Thank you for your attentiveness and generosity.

ODO MEALS AT SS. PETER AND PAUL AND THE MISSION

Our regular meals are served on the third Sunday of the month. The next two will fall on August 20 and September 17.

The actual mission in southwest Detroit at Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral, which is distinct from the ODO meals, is still open for missionaries who are raised up by God to do the ministry of witnessing Christ to our neighbors. At the recent meeting of the deanery clergy with Bishop Paul it was determined to formulate a clearer plan for those who would act as missionaries. More specific “how to do” and “what to do” will be outlined for those who

respond to the call to be missionaries. Each deanery parish is asked to assemble a parish "Mission Team" which is distinct from the food service team. These parish teams may, or may not, work at the Cathedral on the same days and times. Stay tuned for further information

Please remember that on the second Sunday of each month we will have a special collection basket available for contributions to the Mission outreach. This collection goes to support the pastoral presence of Fr. Paul for ministry to our weekly guests. It is not a collection for food or supplies to distribute to the neighbors and guests. That is the work of Orthodox Detroit Outreach (ODO).

COMING EVENTS

Monday, July 31st - Men's Fellowship at 7:00 P.M., location TBD.

Tuesday, August 1st – the Dormition fast begins and runs through the Feast on August 15th.

Sunday, August 6th – Feast of our Lord's Transfiguration. We bless first fruits at this Feast.

Monday – Wednesday, August 7, 8, 9 – Vacation Church School each evening from 7:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.

Tuesday, August 15th – Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos. We bless fragrant herbiage at this Feast. (services at St. Mark and Dormition Monastery, see below)

VACATION CHURCH SCHOOL

We will operate with the same format as we have in the past few years. Each evening will run from 7:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. Classes will be segregated into their usual ages. Some prayers, singing, lessons, crafts and snacks are scheduled each day. The three daily themes are: Daniel in the Lion's Den; Jonah in the Belly of the Whale; and The Three Youths in the Firey Furnace. Sign up sheets are out on the candle table in the church vestibule.

DORMITION FEAST PILGRIMAGE TO DORMITION MONASTERY IN RIVES JUNCTION

The Annual Festal Pilgrimage will take place at the Monastery at 3389 Rives-Eaton Road, Rives Junction, MI 49277 on the eve, August 14 and the Feast, August 15.

August 14 – 5:00 P.M. light supper

6:30 P.M. Vigil of the Feast with Lamentations

August 15 – 9:00 A.M. Akathist, Hours, vesting of hierarchs and procession to the pavilion

10:00 A.M. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy

12:45 P.M. lunch

2:30 P.M. Mystery of Holy Unction

5:30 P.M. Vespers

6:30 P.M. Supper

COFFEE HOUR SUPPLIES REIMBURSEMENTS

Most of you know that on any given Sunday the bagel money in the collection basket may or may not meet the costs that were incurred by the weekly hosts. Efforts to pre-pay for the bagels at Einstein's have been unsuccessful. In order to take away any financial burdens from our hosts the Parish Council has set the following procedures:

- the collection basket will still be set out and all parishioners are asked to continue sharing the costs of their coffee hour refreshments with a contribution.
- **all of the donations in the basket** are to be submitted to the weekly counters.
- receipts for any purchases (particularly bagels) should be submitted to the treasurer, Stephanie Herriman, for a reimbursement check.
- if a host wishes to donate their expenses without reimbursement it will be appreciated.

We understand that changing the process after thirty seven years may take some getting used to, but please try to acclimate to it. Thank you for your cooperation.

Transitioning to the Eucharist: Collision and Coalescence by Fr. Lawrence Farley

Try to imagine what the Great Entrance looked like during the time of Chrysostom and of Maximus the Confessor a couple of centuries later. In that time, while the catechumens were being prayed for and dismissed, and then as the prayers of intercession were offered, deacons exited the church through the north door to enter the little building adjacent to it where the holy vessels were kept. There they gathered up the bread and wine, the chalices, cloths, spoons, spears, and everything needed for the Eucharist and came back with them to the altar, where the episcopal celebrant was waiting for them. While they were gone, the bishop and his presbyters were preparing themselves for the Eucharist: they washed their hands and moved to take their places around the altar. Today the priestly celebrant stands at the altar for the entire service, but originally their place during the readings was sitting on their seats in the far east end of the apse, on the synthronon. Thus the transition from the service centered on the Gospel to the service centered on the Eucharist had a distinctly visual component, for one could observe the clergy leave their seats where they had sat throughout the readings to gather around the altar table.

The prayers accompanying this transition express what they are doing, and may be aptly described as prayers of access to the altar. Today these prayers are mistitled the "Prayers of the Faithful," since they come at the place where the Prayers of the Faithful for the world — i.e. the Great Litany — once stood. But they are clearly not the prayers of the people, but

the private devotional prayers of the clergy. Even a quick look at the prayers themselves reveals this: the clergy pray that God Who “have accounted us worthy to stand even now before Your holy altar” may “enable us whom You have placed in this Your service, blamelessly and without offence to call upon You at all times and in every place.” The second prayer asks that God would “grant us to stand blameless and without condemnation before Your holy altar” and would “grant also to those who pray with us [i.e. the laity] growth in life and faith and spiritual understanding.” The silent prayer which the celebrant offers while the Cherubic Hymn is being sung says the same: “Enable me who am endowed with the grace of the priesthood to stand before this, Your holy Table, and perform the sacred mystery of Your holy and pure Body and precious Blood.” Yet another prayer, offered after the Great Entrance has taken place, is yet another prayer of access to the altar: “Accept also the prayer of us sinners, and bring us to Your holy altar, enabling us to offer unto You gifts and spiritual sacrifice for our sins and for the errors of the people.”

Why such a plethora of prayer all begging the same thing? Because it is a great and fearful thing for mortal man to stand before the consuming Fire of the Holy God. We tend to imagine that a church service is simply a matter of us on earth sending up our prayers “upstairs” and of launching our supplications to heaven. It is much scarier than that: it is a matter of inviting the Lord of all, before Whom even the glorious cherubim and the fiery seraphim veil their faces in awe, to come “downstairs” and to dwell in our midst. “Who among us can dwell with the devouring fire?” asked the sinners of Zion with trembling [Isaiah 33:14]. Who indeed? Yet we sinners in the Eucharist invite the devouring Fire into our midst, inviting a collision of sinful man with the Holy God. In this collision (with the clergy in the front seats — hence all those prayers of access to the altar), we take a tremendous risk. Some found this to their cost, as Saint Paul reminded his Corinthian converts who received unworthily [1 Corinthians 11:30]. But if we all approach in penitence, in humility, forgiving others with contrite hearts and asking for our own forgiveness, this collision does not destroy us, but heals us. We are not consumed by the devouring fire, but illumined, warmed, transformed. These prayers of access to the altar reveal that the Eucharist to which we now transition is a daring *epiclesis*, invoking the fire of God upon us and inviting into our midst both judgment and salvation.

This Eucharist is not only a collision, but also a coalescing, as heaven joins with earth. In the days of Chrysostom and Maximus, the gifts of bread and wine were brought into the church to the accompaniment of a psalm — almost certainly Psalm 24:7-10. It was an obvious choice, since the psalm speaks not only of the Lord of glory coming in (i.e. Christ coming to us in the Eucharist through the chalice), but also of doors and gates. What better

psalm could serve for the procession as it re-entered the nave through the doors and gates leading to and from the sacristy outside? And the refrain of the psalm expressed the nature of the Eucharist which followed — originally the refrain was simply a triple “Alleluia,” but later was added to it the words “Let us who mystically represent the cherubim and who sing the thrice-holy hymn to the life-creating Trinity now lay aside all earthly cares, that we may receive the King of all Who comes invisibly upborne by the angelic hosts.” The refrain was sung over and over between the verses of the psalm until the procession reached the altar and placed the gifts upon the table. (Eventually the psalm dropped out, leaving the refrain all by itself, which was later split in half in mid-sentence to allow for intercessions during the procession.)

But however it is now sung, the words of the refrain reveal the true nature of the Eucharist as a joining of heaven and earth, an intersection of time and eternity. It is not simply a matter of us on earth singing like the cherubim while the cherubim themselves sing in heaven. No: Christ comes upborne by those angelic hosts, and we represent the cherubim by giving audible earthly expression to their spiritual songs as they accompany Christ when He comes to us in the Eucharist. Heaven joins with earth, and earth is lifted up to heaven. That is what the celebrant means when he says to the people, “lift up your hearts!” He is not exhorting them to cheer up, but to ascend into heaven. It is easier than it sounds, for in the Eucharist heaven comes down to us on earth. We serve and receive the Eucharist with the angels of heaven, with the saints, and with all the faithful who have gone before. Our Christian dead may indeed be described as “the dearly departed,” but in the Eucharist we find that they have not departed very far. They are with Christ, and so with us as well.

All this is revealed in this original transition to the Liturgy of the Faithful. That Liturgy is a collision and a coalescence, and it brings the potential for both judgment and salvation into our very midst.

SOME FEAST RELATED QUOTES

The central idea of the Eastern Fathers was that of theosis, the divinization of all creatures, the transfiguration of the world, the idea of the cosmos and not the idea of personal salvation...Only later Christian consciousness began to value the idea of hell more than the idea of the transfiguration and divinization of the world...The Kingdom of God is the transfiguration of the world, the universal resurrection, a new heaven and a new earth.

Nikolai Berdyaev

The Light of the Lord's Transfiguration does not come into being or cease to be, nor is it circumscribed or perceptible to the senses, even though for a short time on the narrow mountain top it was seen by human eyes. Rather, at that moment the initiated disciples of the Lord 'passed', as we have been taught, 'from flesh to spirit' by the transformation of their senses, which the Spirit wrought in them, and so they saw that ineffable light, when and as much as the Holy Spirit's power granted them to do so.

Gregory Palamas

When we become incorruptible and immortal and attain to the blessed state of conformity with Christ, we will be ever with the Lord, gaining fulfillment in the purest contemplations of His visible theophany which will illuminate us with its most brilliant rays, just as it illuminated the disciples at the time of the most divine Transfiguration. This is the light of God, as St. John has said in his Revelation (Rev. 22:5), and such is the opinion of all the saints.

Gregory Palamas

“It was right that the eyewitnesses and minsters of the Word should see the Dormition of His Mother according to the flesh, even the final mystery concerning her: hence, they might be witnesses not only to the Ascension of the Saviour but also it to the translation of her who gave Him birth. Assembled from all parts obey divine power, they came to Sion, and sped on her way to heaven the Virgin who is higher than the cherubim.”

+ **St. John of Damascus**, Lity Tone One for the Feast of Dormition

“Our preparation for meeting the heavenly King, and for the inheritance of eternal life in heaven, should consist of these things. The heavenly King desires souls adorned with immutable virtue, souls prepared so that the Very Lord Himself could abide in them. Do not marvel that the Very Lord wants to live in us. In fact the human soul is more spacious than the heavens and the earth, for it exists in the image of God. And if one removes sins from the soul, the Lord of all will settle in it and will fill it with Himself. “We will come to him and make our dwelling with him” (John 14:23), says the Lord about the souls who love Him.

And so, ye participants in the Christian feasts, and especially the present feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God, ye who are brightly adorned with every virtue and translated to the heavenly kingdom, to Her Son and God, proclaim to each and every one about preparing their souls to be the dwelling place of the Lord, about continual repentance, and about the incorruptible adornment of Christian virtue. Let your death also be unashamed and peaceful, serving as the pledge of a good answer at the dread judgment seat of Christ. Amen.”

— **St. John of Kronstadt**, Sermon on the Dormition of the Theotokos