

The Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Colossians (1:12–18)

Brethren, give thanks to God the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew (22:1–14)

Jesus spoke this parable: The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. Again, he sent out other servants, saying, “Tell those who are invited, ‘See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.’” But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then he said to his servants, “The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.” So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, “Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?” And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, “Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” For many are called, but few are chosen.

Saints Peter & Paul Orthodox Church

Meriden, Connecticut

website: sspeterpaul.org

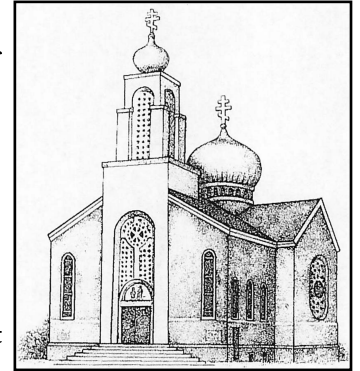
A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America

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33rd Sunday after Pentecost—Tone 8

January 21, 2024

Ven. Maximus the Confessor (662).
Martyr Neophytus of Nicaea (303–305).
Martyrs Eugene, Candidus, Valerian, and
Aquila at Trebizond (3rd c.). Virgin
Martyr Agnes of Rome (ca. 304).

Glory to Jesus Christ!

We welcome everyone who has come to this house of the Lord. We especially welcome all guest and newcomers.

Please feel free to follow along with a Divine Liturgy book from the table at the glass doors. For this Sunday and most of the year, we are using the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom (at the beginning of the book). The most significant hymns and responses specifically for today are printed inside this bulletin.

Holy Communion is a solemn responsibility: Orthodox Christians who have prepared through Confession, prayer, and fasting may participate. At the end of the Liturgy, everyone is welcome to come for a blessing and to share in the blessed bread (called “antidoron,” this blessed bread is used in our prayers but is not itself a sacrament).

Afterward, please join us downstairs for fellowship and refreshment. We look forward to greeting you personally, and we are glad that you are here.

Upcoming Events in Parish Life

We invite anyone to pray along with us, following our services online. Visit our website (sspeterpaul.org) for details.

Saturday, Jan. 20	Vigil followed by confessions	5 PM
Sunday, Jan. 21	Divine Liturgy (enrolling catechumens before the Liturgy begins)	9:30 AM
Tuesday, Jan. 23	Online Study of the Gospel of Luke: sspeterpaul.org/study	7 PM
	All are welcome to join us on Zoom to study Luke 1–2.	
Wednesdays	Morning Worship	8:15 AM
Thursday, Jan. 25	Foundation in Orthodox Christianity Session 2: “I believe in one God...”	6:30 PM
	All are welcome, but especially those who seek to be received into the Orthodox Faith. Participate in these sessions on Zoom: sspeterpaul.org/study	
Saturday, Jan. 27	Vigil followed by confessions	5 PM
Sunday, Jan. 28	Divine Liturgy	9:30 AM
	Meeting to organize a parish sisterhood	
Wed., Feb. 1	Vigil for the Meeting of the Lord	6 PM
Thursday, Feb. 2	Divine Liturgy—Meeting of the Lord	9:30 AM

With the Theophany and the Blessing of Water, we enter the season of house blessings. Our homes need this spiritual “spring cleaning” each year to free them from the remembrance of sin and fill them with the presence of the Holy Spirit. All that is required is that you prepare a list of the living and departed that you wish to commemorate, and set up a candle and bowl of holy water before an icon. (Fr. Joshua brings holy water, too, in case anyone needs more.) To set a date for your house blessing, please contact Fr. Joshua (email priest@sspeterpaul.org or call 203-237-4539).

Free Narcan Training: we have multiple opportunities in our area to be trained and equipped to prevent an opioid overdose. If we have enough interest, we can also schedule Narcan training at the parish. If interested, please speak with Linda Craig (203-494-9789).

Lauren Alexandra Tvardzik, daughter of Subdeacon Paul, a friend of many in our diocese, fell asleep in the Lord after suffering a massive stroke. May her memory be eternal!

Helen Olsen’s husband Bob departed this life last week. Helen is Alexia Tassmer’s sister, and a shut-in on our prayer list. May Bob’s memory be eternal!

The cross was lit last week by Vera Mankevich for the first anniversary of the repose of her husband Al. May his memory be eternal!

We Ask Your Prayers

Many years to those celebrating as their heavenly patron Blessed Xenia of St. Petersburg (Jan. 24) or **St. Gregory the Theologian** (Jan. 25).

For those celebrating birthdays: Alban Mosher on Jan 21.

For the Sick & Suffering:

Corey (Knap)—nephew of Valentina Knap, recovering from a serious accident
William (Weidmann)—husband of Adrian, suffering from a chronic immune condition similar to multiple sclerosis
Steven (Cardillo)—local Neighborhood Association organizer
Starr (Sarrazin)—friend of Robin Levesque
Joyce—friend of Mary Jane Rodgers

Gregory (Mankevich)	Christopher (Sullivan)	Anita (Propheter)
Rosemary (Delaney)	Douglas (Hodges)	Steven (Rygiel)
Irene	Lorraine	Jacob
Juliana	Katelyn	Crystal
Angela	Innocent	Larissa
Jeffrey	Stacia	
Cyprian and Dana	Nicole and Naaman	Helen and Helene

For Our Shut-Ins:

Yvonne (Rutcho)	Jennie (Padick)
Margaret (Savchik)	Helen (Olsen)

To share news in the bulletin, or to add someone to our prayer list, please contact Fr. Joshua: priest@sspeterpaul.org or 203-237-4539.

If you would like to commemorate loved ones by lighting the cross in church, please contact Alexia Tassmer: 203-284-0856.

Give thanks to God, and support the work he is doing through SS. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church:

<https://sspeterpaul.org/donate> or use this QR Code →



Hymns of the Day

Tone 8 Troparion (*Resurrection*)

You descended from on high, O Merciful One!
You accepted the three day burial to free us from our sufferings!//
O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to You!

Tone 4 Troparion (*Apostles Peter & Paul*)

O first-enthroned of the Apostles,
teachers of the universe:
entreat the Master of all
to grant peace to the world,//
and to our souls great mercy!

Tone 8 Troparion (*Ven. Maximus*)

O Champion of Orthodoxy, teacher of purity and of true worship,
the enlightener of the universe and the adornment of hierarchs;
all wise Father Maximus, your teachings have gleamed with light upon all
things.//
Intercede before Christ God to save our souls!

Tone 4 Troparion (*St. Neophytus*)

Your holy martyr Neophytus, O Lord,
through his sufferings has received an incorruptible crown from You, our
God.
For having Your strength, he laid low his adversaries,
and shattered the powerless boldness of demons.//
Through his intercession, save our souls!

Tone 8 Kontakion (*Resurrection*)

By rising from the tomb, You raised the dead and resurrected Adam.
Eve exults in Your Resurrection,//
and the world celebrates Your rising from the dead, O greatly Merciful One!

Tone 6 Kontakion (*Ven. Maximus*)

The Thrice-radiant Light took up abode in your soul, O all-blissful father,
and displayed it as an elect vessel, manifest to the ends of the earth.
O blessed Maximus, you explain hard-to-grasp doctrines with brilliance and
clarity,//
proclaiming the transcendent and unoriginate Trinity to all.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;

Tone 8 Kontakion (*St. Neophytus*)

You shined forth from the mount like lightning,
glorifying Christ through your struggles and death as a martyr.//
Therefore, you have received an unfading crown, O Great-martyr Neophytus.
now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 6 Kontakion “Steadfast Protectress”

Prokeimenon in the Eighth Tone (*Resurrection*)

Pray and make your vows / before the Lord, our God! (*Ps. 75:10a*)
Verse: In Judah God is known; His Name is great in Israel. (*Ps. 75:1*)

Before the Gospel, the Alleluia

Verse: Come, let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to God
our Savior! (*Ps. 94:1*)
Verse: Let us come before His face with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful
noise to Him with songs of praise! (*Ps. 94:2*)

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! (*Ps. 148:1*)
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Notes on the Week

Today is designated Sanctity of Life Sunday. At the end of the Liturgy, we
will pray the following:

O Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son, Who are in the bosom of the
Father, True God, source of life and immortality, Light of Light, Who came
into the world to enlighten it: You were pleased to be conceived in the womb
of the Virgin Mary for the salvation of our souls by the power of Your All-
Holy Spirit. O Master, Who came that we might have life more abundantly,
we ask You to enlighten the minds and hearts of those blinded to the truth
that life begins at conception and that the unborn in the womb are already
adorned with Your image and likeness; enable us to guard, cherish, and
protect the lives of all those who are unable to care for themselves. For You
are the Giver of Life, bringing each person from non-being into being,
sealing each person with divine and infinite love. Be merciful, O Lord, to
those who, through ignorance or willfulness, affront Your divine goodness
and providence through the evil act of abortion. May they, and all of us,
come to the light of Your Truth and glorify You, the Giver of Life, together
with Your Father, and Your All-Holy and Life-giving Spirit, now and ever
and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Sanctity of Life Sunday 2024

Archpastoral Message of His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon

Sunday, January 21, 2024

To the Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America,

My Beloved Children in the Lord,

As we mark Sanctity of Life Sunday this year, there will be much discussion of the “right to life.” Of course, we Orthodox Christians believe that certain rights, the right to life among them, should be respected, enshrined in law, and protected by civil authority. But human life is something even more precious than a mere right: it is a divine gift.

“Lo, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward,” as the Psalmist says (Ps. 126:3). We are called to recognize every human life, from conception to natural death, as a gift of the Lord. This means protecting the unborn, but in a broader sense this means helping our broken society and broken world to view our fellow human beings not as mere mouths to feed or potential threats or problems to be solved or subjects to be controlled, but as blessings from above. The unborn are a blessing; children are a blessing; the elderly are a blessing; the difficult people in our lives are a blessing; even our enemies—perhaps especially our enemies—are a blessing.

Moreover, we speak of the sanctity of life for two reasons: because life comes from the Lord, and because it should be offered back to the Lord through service to him and to others, resulting in sanctity. If we understand that we are merely servants, doing as we have been bidden (Lk. 17:10), and if we recognize that the greatest and holiest is the one who became a servant of all through his Incarnation, his ministry, and his Passion and Rising (Mt. 23:11), then we are in the best position of all to treat each human being as a blessing, not in an abstract sense, but in the sense of someone whom we are privileged to serve.

Living in this way, we also better understand our own life as a blessing, a blessing because it is an opportunity to attain to holiness. If we truly

live according to our belief in the profound sanctity of life, then we will naturally “commend ourselves and each other and all our life unto Christ our God,” sending up thanksgiving and blessing his holy Name on account of the incalculably precious gift of human life and for every man who comes into the world (Jn. 1:9).

On this Sanctity of Life Sunday, we pray that all people of North America and throughout the world would come to recognize the good and perfect gift (Jam. 1:17) that is human life and learn to cherish that gift and render glory unto the Giver, the benevolent Creator of all things, one God in Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, unto the never-ending ages.

Yours in Christ,

+Tikhon

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada



Sanctity of Life Resources

The Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America has established an annual commemoration of the Sanctity of Life on a Sunday close to the anniversary of the Roe v Wade Supreme Court decision, which eliminated almost all legal restrictions on abortion in the United States.

The OCA shares through a Sanctity of Life Resources page a wide range of statements, reflections, and organizations which faithfully present a loving, non-partisan and clear witness from the Orthodox Faith, going back to the earliest days of the Church.

Learn more at <https://www.oca.org/sanctity-life-resources>

Or use this QR code:

