

Rector's Letter, June, 2018

Dear brothers and sisters:

We are coming to the season of summer vacations and travel plans. Did you ever consider how much attention the Church gives to travel? Every service, we pray for "those who travel by land, by sea, and by air." There are special prayers that can be said for anyone about to go on a journey. Much spiritual counsel has been written for those who are traveling. Perhaps this seems a little odd: we're just going for a little "R & R," after all. What's the big deal?

Well, the Scriptures see travel as a really big deal. It's dangerous: think of the man attacked by thieves on the way to Jericho in the parable of the Good Samaritan. It's a time of temptation: think of the Israelites complaining for 40 years in the wilderness, "Are we there yet?" It can also be an opportunity to meet the Lord: think of how many people met Jesus Christ as he was traveling himself, and changed their lives.

The temptation is to leave behind not just our business and chores but our consciences, too: to "take a vacation from God," or even to engage in pursuits we'd be ashamed of at home. And then we're surprised when we come back feeling worse than when we left! A true vacation is one that refreshes the soul — and who better than God himself to ask for that refreshment?

So it is worth preparing spiritually for our vacations, so that they may be a blessing and "lead us not into temptation." Travel still has its hazards today: why not make a point of preparing for communion and asking for the special prayers before going on a journey? We also need to take the time to find the lo-

cal church where we are going, and to let the priest know we are coming.

Pack your prayer book along with your sunscreen, too. It's good to break out of our routines, but it makes it hard to keep the good habits of prayer. We actually need to make extra efforts to pray when we travel. Otherwise, we lose our spiritual compass and can find ourselves in distress at a time when we imagined we would be at our best.

On the other hand, if we make the effort to meet the Lord even as we travel, he himself will give us rest and refreshment:

Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day [of the Lord's resurrection] to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know him....

Now it came to pass, as he sat at the table with them, that he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew him; and he vanished from their sight. And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us on the road, and while he opened the Scriptures to us?"

(Luke 24:13-16, 30-32)

Who might we meet on the road?

Yours in Christ,

F. Jeffrey S. Modlin

Around the Parish

We are looking for **contributions toward a new Tomb and Cross**, which would be placed in the center of the church during Holy Week. Our current Crucifixion icon is large and showing signs of strain; we intend to keep it at the side of the church year-round. We have been using a temporary tomb in recent years, and we would like to build one that would serve as our memorial table during the rest of the year. If you would like to donate, please speak with Fr. Joshua.

Eight days after Pentecost, we begin the **Apostles' Fast**, a time to reflect on what has passed since Pascha, to seek the gift of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and to prepare for the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul on June 29.

Our **patronal feast of SS. Peter & Paul** is on Friday, June 29. We will celebrate the with Great Vespers on the eve, Thursday, June 28, at 6 PM, and Divine Liturgy on Friday at 9:30 AM. On Friday evening, June 29, we will hold a **picnic for the parish and neighborhood**, starting at 5 PM.

The youth of our parish (ages 11–17) are invited to a special Youth Retreat with His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon on Saturday, June 30. The day will begin with Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at 10 AM at All Saints Orthodox Church, Hartford. Diocesan youth will sing the responses and serve in the altar. The liturgy will be followed by a full-day Youth Retreat led by Met. Tikhon. This is a unique opportunity for the children of our parish to spend time with the head of the Orthodox Church in America, a

humble, thoughtful, and very pastoral bishop. All Saints is located at 205 Scarborough St, Hartford.

As we plan **summer vacations, please do not take a “vacation from the Lord!”** It is our responsibility and our greatest blessing to worship the Lord every Sunday; the Lord’s Day. **Make plans to attend church wherever you go;** Fr. Joshua would gladly help you find a parish. It is also good practice to call or write ahead, so that you are expected. Finally, you are invited to **seek a blessing on your travels**—the Church has prayers just for that!

2018 Vacation Church School: July 9–13; Three Saints Park, 112 Miller Road, Bethany. Daily 9 AM to 4 PM with Family Night on Friday starting at 5 PM. Cost: \$40 per child, for a week-long Vacation Church School for ages 5–15. Your child will experience fun, faith, friendship, swimming, bible study, religious education, worship and song. This year’s theme will be “The Living Word—the Bible in our lives.” For more information: Mary Pagliaro at 203-513-2049 or Fr. Patrick Burns at 203-734-3988.

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