

Rector's Letter,

May, 2019

Dear brothers and sisters:

“Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!” We are living through this season of the Lord's Pascha, a season of life, of joy, of brightness, of “chocolate eggs and Jesus risen!” as a boy was once heard to say.

The Lord has opened the path from death to life for us, and we may freely and joyfully follow. The only difficulty is that, for us, choosing life looks a lot like dying. This is not some arcane mystical theology. Every real decision requires turning away from — “being dead to” — all the other possibilities. If we dedicate ourselves to excelling in a sport, that means sacrificing time and energy that we might have used for learning something else (or just goofing off). If we get married, we “die” to any other possible mate. If we have had a heart attack, to preserve our life we must “be dead” to unhealthy foods.

In just the same way, our Lord calls us to live by dedicating ourselves entirely to God. As with excelling in a sport, this means we must be dead to distractions from what is most important: loving God and following His ways. As with marriage, we must be faithful and dead to anything that we are tempted to love more than God. Like someone confronting a deadly disease, we must

be dead to any “guilty pleasures” — sins, to give them a more honest and less attractive name — that would rob us of life.

For the Lord of Life, physically dying was the miracle; rising to life again was “only natural.” For us, dying physically is the the most natural thing in the world. Death is surer even than taxes. For us the miracle is living — really living, without fear, without contention, without resentment, but full of Life.



That sort of life is not natural to us. It means giving up the hold we imagine we have on life and entrusting ourselves totally to the Life of All. It means dying to all those “earthly cares” and sins which so closely entangle us. It means beginning to die to our selves so that we can find our true self in Jesus Christ.

That sort of dying is hard. But finding eternal life without letting go of everything else is completely impossible. Let's choose life.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Julius S. Modlin

Around the Parish

We are happy to announce that **Addison Veitch is prepared to be received by Holy Chrismation** on Bright Saturday, May 4, at 3:45 PM.

Our customary day for the **Blessing of Graves** is St. Thomas Sunday, May 5, with a rain date of Sunday, May 12. If you would like to **bless a grave at another cemetery** during this Paschal season, please speak with Fr. Joshua to arrange a time.

On Sunday, June 2, we will hold a **St. George Celebration** during coffee hour. We had wonderful creativity last year, so start planning your dragons!

After forty days, the Paschal Season concludes with the **Ascension of Our Lord**, on June 6, when our Lord completed the instruction of his disciples and ascended bodily to heaven, promising the gift of the Holy Spirit. We will celebrate on Wednesday, June 5, with Vespers and Liturgy at 6 PM.

The Feast of Pentecost follows ten days later, on Sunday, June 16. On that day, we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples, when the apostles began their public preaching and the Church was revealed to all. Until that day, we honor our Lord's rising from the grave by remaining standing in prayer, but at Kneeling Vespers of Pentecost (immediately after the Divine Liturgy that Sunday), we kneel for the first time.

We are once more holding a **parish game night** on first Friday of the month, starting May 3. All are welcome, and several non-gamers bring a craft project to enjoy during the same time.

At the entrance of our church are **Children's Worship Bags** to help our young children learn, grow and pray together with Jesus during Divine Liturgy. Borrow a bag to share with your child and return it at the end of the service. The bags were prepared by members of the Growth and Outreach Committee for children to enjoy weekly.

Please mark your calendars for our **Annual Church Picnic**: Sunday, June 23, after Divine Liturgy, at Peckham Park in Middlefield. Details will follow.

More Youth Rally volunteers are urgently needed. We need active, healthy and committed adult men and women who are able to serve as cabin staff. Volunteers must be of legal adult age who are Orthodox Christians in "good standing." If you know of any person appropriate to serve as a Youth Rally volunteer staff member, ask them to contact Fr. John: (860) 582-3631 or email terryvilleorthodoxchurch@gmail.com.

