

Rector's Letter,

June, 2019

Dear brothers and sisters:

We have now come to “a season of saints”: on Pentecost the Holy Spirit **descended and enlightened** the apostles to preach the Good News of Jesus Christ; All Saints a week later celebrates the tradition of the martyrs who showed their confidence in that Good News by giving up their lives rather than their faith; All Saints of America is celebrated a week after that; **the next Sunday**, we celebrate both the Nativity of St. John the Baptist and All Saints of Britain and Ireland; and our church's feast of Saints Peter and Paul a few days later on June 29! We are truly “surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses,” who all encourage us to run the same race without losing hope.

The problem is that for us life does not seem much like a holy race, some glorious marathon where the prize is given to every runner who at last crosses the finish line, but more like a marshy thicket that we got lost in. We can lose sight of the path of life. We start off pleasantly enough, delighting in God's creation, and then we come across the attractive scent of what the saints call “worldly pleasures”: anything that



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pleases ourselves without thought of those around us, anything that makes us forget to care first about God, anything that promises us good things but leaves us as empty as when we started.

We say, “we're not saints — we can't live like them!” And we think to ourselves, “We don't want to be like the saints! Their lives are hard and we wouldn't be free to do what we want.” So we allow ourselves to be drawn off the path. We get tangled up in the thorns of our own desires, long after they cease giving us any happiness, and we are trapped. We start out doing what we want and find ourselves enslaved to the demands of those wants.

The truth is, we *are* meant to be saints, all of us in our many different ways. The Lord made each of us in his image, so that we would be free to love him and live with him. But as soon as we stop acting according to God's image, we lose our freedom. We find ourselves addicted to drink, to sugar, to television, to pornography, to prestige or approval — you name it! The saints are the ones who have found the way back to true freedom, and not only that, but true joy as well. Those who pursue happiness for its own sake will never find it. Try God's way instead: ask him what his will is, and find real, lasting joy in the company of the saints.

Yours in Christ,

F. John S. Mosher

Around the Parish

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

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. This year, the Fast is very short: June 24-28. Let's use those days well!

Get ready for our **Annual Church Picnic**: Sunday, June 23, 12-3 PM. This year, we are holding the picnic at Peckham Park, 161 Strickland Rd, Middlefield. The park has great amenities: a pavilion with bathrooms and a kitchen, a playground, a skating park, and handicapped parking. For more, speak with BreAnna Rygiel.

Our **patronal feast of SS. Peter & Paul** is on Friday, June 29. We will celebrate **the** with Great **Remove**

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Vespers on the eve, Friday, June 28, at 6 PM, and Divine Liturgy on Saturday at 9:30 AM.

We are invited to All Saints of America, Salisbury, for an **Akathist to the Saints of North America** at **4 PM** on Sunday, June 30. The Salisbury church was the first to be given this patronal feast, and they have **they** largest assembly of relics of American saints as well. This simple and beautiful service has been a blessing to all who participate in it. All Saints of America is located on 313 Twin Lakes Road, Salisbury.

2019 Vacation Church School: July 8-12; 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 Work of the People—the Liturgy." For more information contact Fr. Patrick Burns at 203-734-3988 or pneumaticmotives@gmail.com.

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!