

August 2017

SAINT INNOCENT ORTHODOX CHURCH

AUGUST NEWSLETTER AND CALENDAR



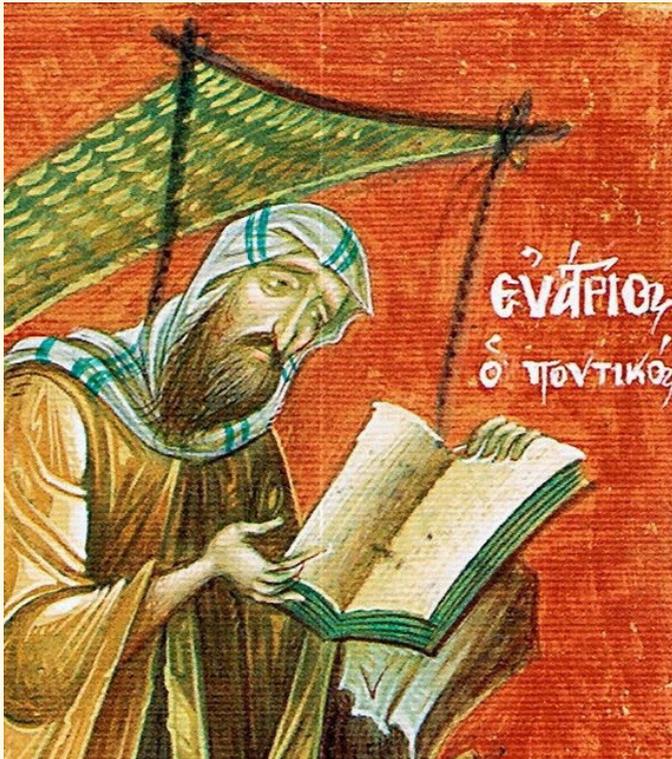
Fall and Get Up

An Early Christian monk and writer, Evagrius of Pontus, was once asked: "What do you do there in the monastery?" He replied: "We fall and get up, fall and get up, fall and get up again." Another pastor in the early church added a caveat that it is only demons who fall and in pride stay fallen.

The above personalities are speaking of the practical reality that dedicated, intentional Christians fall into sins of all sorts. Whether one is raised in the Christian faith or has a dramatic conversion to Christ, either way we all eventually slip into sin. Sin, for those who might not know, is disobedience, turning away from God/life and turning towards death. One can sin physically by being a thief. One can also sin by have a nurturing unhealthy spiritual attitudes such as lust and anger.

What should one do after a fall into sin actions or attitudes? In Genesis we are given a basic outline of what NOT to do. Adam and Eve covered themselves, they hid from God, avoided taking responsibility for their actions, and they blamed everyone else for their fall. Like Adam and Eve, whenever we fall we will be tempted to do those same things. The shame of sin is powerful.

What then should we do? What does it look like to "get up?" Getting up is a reversal of the fall. It looks like us not covering our shame by being willing to experience the shameful feelings of spiritual nakedness. Getting up means taking personal responsibility for our falls and asking for forgiveness from God or others we may have hurt. Getting up means that we accept whatever consequences for our



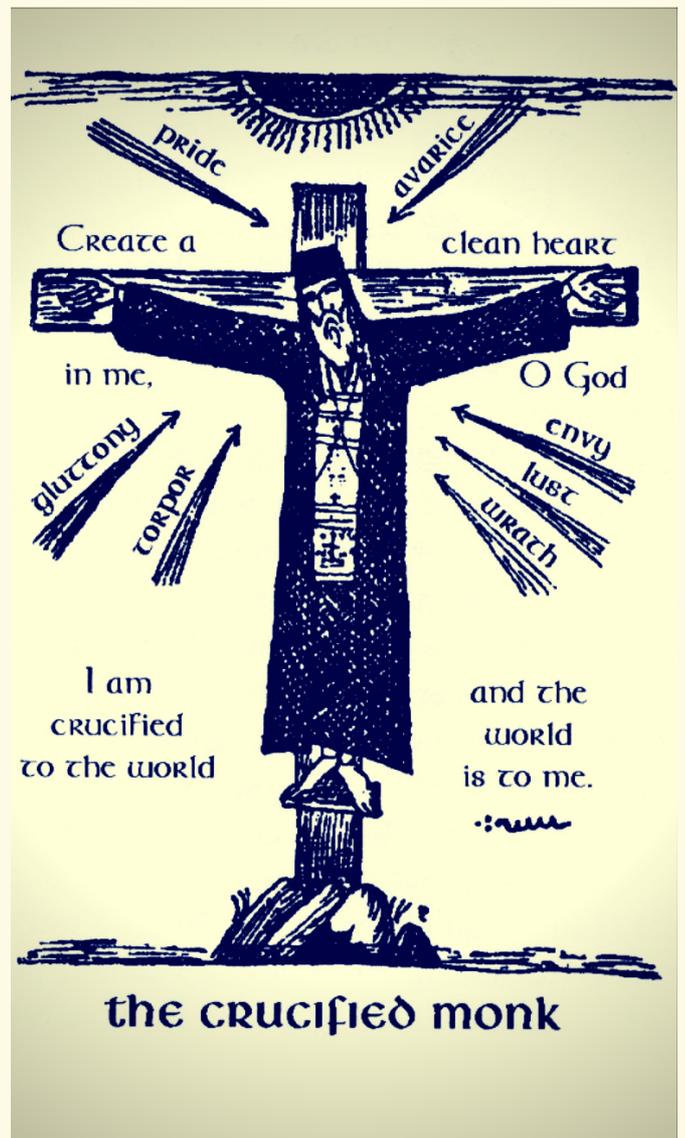
In our spiritual lives we all have choices to make. We can choose imitate Christ who dies and rises. We can chose like all the saints of old to get up when we fall. Or, we can chose imitate the demons who because of their pride fall and stay fallen.

Yours in Christ, Fr. Theophan

actions and move on with our Christian spiritual life of dedicated prayer, scripture reading, going to church, and growing in the virtues. The Scriptures assure us the God loves us and accepts our repentance. We are assured forgiveness if we are truly seeking it.

At this point there is one thing that should be noted about those who chose not to get up after their falls. Not getting up is because of pride. When one decided that they are not worthy of God's love or forgiveness it is pride. Pride tells us that we, as Christians, should be above these slipups. Pride leads us to hate ourselves, by keeping us locked into the delusion that only the perfect can approach God. considerations.

Traditionally, the church has always been understood as a hospital where broken people go to find healing and health. The transformation from death to life in Christ can only happen in the lives of those who fall and get up. There is no authentic victory without the humbling experience of our brokenness and need for Christ. Christ is the Physician of our souls and bodies. No one seeks a physician without being aware of their own sickness.





- On Sunday the 20th we plan to have an informal Parish update.
- August 29th is a strict fast in honor of the beheading of St. John the Baptist.
- Confessions are heard every Saturday after Great Vespers or before Sunday Liturgy between 9:15- 9:40am. There is no need to schedule an appointment unless it is outside of the above times.

MANY YEARS!

Birthdays

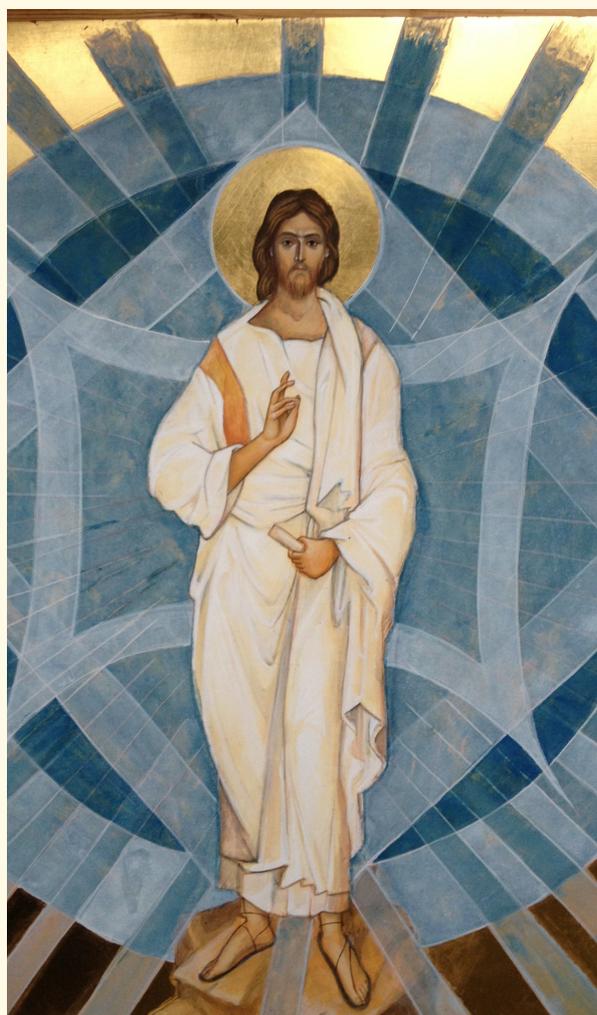
- 5--Barry Lee
- 7--Andrew Cabello
- 14--Jacob Plummer
- 22--Matthew Cabello
- 24--Nadia Stephens
- 26--Eric Olson

Anniversaries

- 6--Fr. Theophan and Pres. Elena
- 13--John and Heidi Hintermaier
- 15--Barry and Bianca Lee
- 20--Paul and Linda Tutcher
- 20--Peter and Olga Uchakin
- 27--Allen and Leann Almquist

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- On August first we begin the Dormition Fast which lasts until the Feast of Dormition on the 14th.
- During the Dormition Fast we will serve the Paraklesis service on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6pm.
- The Great Feast of our Lord's Transfiguration is on a Sunday the 6th. In honor of this feast Vigil will be served on Saturday the 5th at 6pm. On Sunday we will serve the festal Liturgy.
- Please bring grapes and fruit for the blessing of fruit at the Liturgy on Sunday the 6th.
- The Savage family children will be baptized after the Liturgy on August 6th.
- On Saturday's after Vespers we are having our Catechism series - Exploring the Orthodox Christian Faith. All are welcome.
- The Great Feast of Dormition is on Tuesday the 15th. We will serve Vigil with the Lamentations at 6pm on the 14th. The festal Liturgy will be at 9am on the 15th.
- The Parish Council is scheduled to meet on Thursday the 17th at 7pm.



WHY DO WE FAST FOR DORMITION?

It would be a gross understatement to say that much has been written about the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos. Yet very little has been written about the fast that precedes it.

Every Orthodox Christian is aware and generally knows the reason behind the fasts for Pascha and Christmas. But while they may know of the Dormition Fast, few follow it, and more than a few question why it is there, neither knowing its purpose. First, given the pervasive misunderstanding of the purpose of fasting itself, a refresher on its purpose is always a good idea. There is a perception that we should fast when we want something, as though the act of fasting somehow appeases God, and seeing us “suffer” gets Him to grant our request.

Nothing can be further from the truth. It is not our fasting that pleases God, it is the fruits of our fast (provided we fast in the proper mind set, and do not merely diet) that please Him. We fast, not to get what we want, but to prepare ourselves to receive what God wants to give us. The purpose of fasting is to bring us more in line with another Mary, the sister of Lazarus, and away from their sister Martha, who in the famous passage was “anxious and troubled about many things.” Fasting is intended to bring us to the realization of “the one thing needful.” It is to help us put God first and our own desires second, if not last. As such it serves to prepare us to be instruments of God’s will, as with Moses in his flight from Egypt and on Mt. Sinai, as well as our Lord’s fast in the wilderness. Fasting turns us away from ourselves and toward God. In essence it helps us become like the Theotokos, an obedient servant of God, who heard His word and kept it better than anyone else has or could.

So why do we fast before Dormition? In a close-knit family, word that its matriarch is on her deathbed brings normal life to a halt. Otherwise important things (parties, TV, luxuries, personal desires) become

unimportant; life comes to revolve around the dying matriarch. It is the same with the Orthodox family; word that our matriarch is on her deathbed, could not (or at least should not) have any different effect than the one just mentioned. The Church, through the Paraklesis Service, gives us the opportunity to come to that deathbed and eulogize and entreat the woman who bore God, the vessel of our salvation and our chief advocate at His divine throne. And as, in the earthly family, daily routines and the indulgence in personal wants should come to a halt. Fasting, in its full sense (abstaining from food and desires) accomplishes this. Less time in leisure or other pursuits leaves more time for prayer and reflection on she who gave us Christ, and became the first and greatest Christian. In reflecting on her and her incomparable life, we see a model Christian life, embodying Christ’s retort to the woman who stated that Mary was blessed because she bore Him: blessed rather are those who hear His word and keep it. Mary did this better than anyone. As Fr. Thomas Hopko has stated, she heard the word of God and kept it so well, that she of all women in history was chosen not only to hear His Word but give birth to it (Him). So while we fast in contemplation of her life, we are simultaneously preparing ourselves to live a life in imitation of her. That is the purpose of the Dormition Fast.

When the assumption of thine undefiled body was being prepared, the Apostles gazed on thy bed, viewing thee with trembling. Some contemplated thy body and were dazzled, but Peter cried out to thee in tears, saying, I see thee clearly, O Virgin, stretched out, O life of all, and I am astonished. O thou undefiled one, in whom the bliss of future life dwelt, beseech thy Son and God to preserve thy people unimpaired.

(Sticheron after the Gospel, Orthros)
Daniel Manzuk is a reader at the Church of the Virgin Mary in Alsip, IL.

August 2017

**Thank you to all those who helped
pack and store the trailer!**



**Good riddance
13 years of Modspace!**



August 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 <i>Dormition Fast begins</i>	2	3	4	5
		6pm Paraklesis	6pm Daily Vespers	1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry 6pm Paraklesis		6pm Vigil for Transfiguration
6 Holy Transfiguration 9:40am 3 & 6th Hours 10am Festal Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	7	8 6pm Paraklesis	9 6pm Daily Vespers	10 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry 6pm Paraklesis	11	12 6pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Confessions
13 9:40am 3 & 6th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	14 6pm Vigil w/ lamentations	15 9am Divine Liturgy Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos	6pm Daily Vespers	1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry 7pm Parish Council		6pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Confessions
20	21	22	23 Mercer Church Day 9-2pm 6pm Daily Vespers	24 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	25	26 6pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Confessions
27 9:40am 3 & 6th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape Parish Update	28	29	30 6pm Daily Vespers	31 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry		