
Saint Innocent

Orthodox Christian Church

June 2019 Newsletter & Calendar



Up & Down the Mountain

By D. Farley

*Seasons of Grace: Reflections on the Orthodox Church
Year* (pp. 166–168). Chesterton, IN: Ancient Faith Publishing.

DESPITE THE GREETING-CARD WITTICISMS about being over the hill, I've invariably found that the road home leads uphill. In other words, things get tougher as we near our goals in life—that last push always seems to be the one that requires the most from us.

Maybe that's one reason why the Apostles had to climb up a mountain before the Ascension. I think this must be one of the most neglected feasts in our calendar; it has, after all, no special customs attached, such as the blessing of grapes at Transfiguration, nor is it one of the traditional baptismal feasts like Theophany, or Pascha itself. We tend to think of this holy day as something of a “comedown” in our Paschal celebrations, as the feasting ends and we enter a prayerful time of waiting for the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost. Yet Ascension is in fact the “climax of the climax,” the grand finale of the Paschal event.

After the long dark vigil of that first Holy Friday and Saturday, the Resurrection burst upon the Apostles' despair in dazzling glory. From the depths of the pit, from the regions dark and deep, they were carried to a sudden and unexpected height. The Kingdom! they thought. Our Master is going to bring in His Kingdom now—perhaps we will ride in His train to Jerusalem now, and this time not on a humble donkey ...

But no. Instead of leading them into Jerusalem, He sends them, on a new pilgrimage—after they had thought they were done, all the darkness and toil swallowed up in the victory of the Resurrection—after all this, they must go back to Galilee where they began. And then they have to climb a mountain! And no, He does not lead them—He promises instead to meet them there, after they have walked there and, by faith, scaled the mountain.

We must remember the word climax has the same root as climb. Ascension truly is the climax of the Paschal season, the final seal on the faith of the Apostles who obeyed the Lord's command to make this mountain pilgrimage. His going into heaven in their very sight was final proof of His divinity, His return to where He came from. The Resurrection was joy and power and the turning of darkness to light; but while Jesus remained with them on earth, whatever miracles He wrought, He would still appear to be an earthly Messiah seeking an earthly kingdom. The Ascension places the final nail in the coffin of that misapprehension.

They stood gazing up into heaven in amazement. One imagines they were a little stunned—You're going, Lord? But—but—But they've learned from experience that when He makes a promise, it is fulfilled. Meet me at the mountain—I'll be there. And He was. Go on back to Jerusalem now, and stay there—I'll send you My Spirit.

Mountaintops have a long history in God's dealings with His people, most notably in the case of Moses communing with God, receiving the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai and bringing them back down to the Israelites. And let's not forget Noah—the ark landed upon a mountaintop and, like Moses, Noah afterward came down from the mountaintop, transformed, to a new life and way of living.

Lord, however, as so often is shown in the Gospel accounts, walks the same road as the prophets of old, only to turn the expectations of observers on their heads. As our Lord blesses His disciples, instead of



coming down the mountain, He ascends out of their sight into heaven on a cloud—and they are the ones who must come down the mountain they climbed in such toil and hope!

At last they understand He is no earthly King. Nor is He merely a God-sent prophet; this, they realize, is the role they are called upon to fill. They, with the all-too-human weaknesses revealed to them in Holy Week (You will deny me, Peter) are to come down the mountain like Moses and preach to the people.

Up and down the mountain. This was the obedience given the Apostles, and so it is ours too. When we make the arduous upward pilgrimages of life, learning and growing by experience, it is not for us to stand too long gazing into heaven thinking, Alleluia! We made it! The Lord got us through this terrible vale of misery—through this pain or illness, this loss of a loved one, this disappointment or test. We must come back down that mountain, because we are His prophets, His sent ones, like heroes returning from a quest to share what we have gained. And the prize we have won on this quest is none other than the Pearl of Great Price, the Lord Himself.

I would just as soon stay on the mountaintop, myself—the air is clear, and there aren't too many crowds. When you go back down, as often as not you find people who don't want to hear about the mountaintop—like the ancient Israelites, they are too busy worshiping idols. And then, too, there is the sheer dejection in coming back down. We have run the race, finished the course, the taste of victory is sweet as we plant our flag on the summit. Who could wish to go back down again?

There is one thing to make the descent bearable, the one thing by which we can do anything—our Lord's promise given in Acts 1:8, which we know will be kept: "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses."

News & Announcements

- The playground equipment is scheduled ship on June 10th. We will be planning a “building party” which will be announced.
- The Great Feast of Ascension will be celebrated on June 5/6th. We will have Great Vespers at 6 pm on the evening of the 5th and the Festal Divine Liturgy at 9 am on the 6th.
- The Parish Council is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, June 12th at 7 pm.
- The Great Feast of Pentecost (The Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles) will be celebrated on Sunday, June 16th. Vigil will be served at 6 pm on the evening of the 15th and Liturgy will be at the normal time on Sunday.
- We will be Chrismating our Catechumens at 9:30am on the Feast of Pentecost.
- Following the Divine Liturgy of Pentecost, we will be serving the Vespers of Pentecost with the Kneeling Prayers. Bring your knee pads if you need them!
- Fr. Theophan’s will be on family vacation from June 17 through July 2. Fr. Serpahim Joa will be filling in for him on weekends of the 23rd and the 30th which means we will continue to have Great Vespers on Saturday evening and the Liturgy as usual on Sundays.
- Don’t forget to send in some saints name suggestions to Fr. Theophan for our parish hall rooms and main gathering area.

Turn your Father’s Day shopping into a force for good. Shop at smile.amazon.com/ch/58-2418134 and Amazon donates to St Innocent Orthodox Christian Church.

- Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church has invited our children to participate in their Vacation Bible School. The dates are:
 - June 21 from 4-6 pm
 - June 22 from 9-12 am
 - June 23 from 12-6 pm
- Please contact Holy Cross if you are interested in further details about VBS.
- Please see the calendar below for liturgical schedule.
- If you would like to partake of the Sacrament of Confession the best times are before or after any scheduled service.

Have you been looking for something you can do around here that would be a big help to our parish?

If so, please consider becoming our kitchen “supply sergeant”! We need someone to go to Sam’s Club (roughly, once every six weeks) to pick up the supplies that we need for coffee hour. You would be collaborating with Chris Wilcox (the kitchen king) on which supplies are needed and when. This is an easy way to serve our parish community, so if you’d like to volunteer, please email Chris or find him (or Molly Croft) at coffee hour. You can find their contact information online in our Realm church directory.



We are currently participating in the Baby Bottle Boomerang fundraiser for Monroe County Pregnancy Center. There are still some more baby bottles if you would like to take one home. If you do not want to use a bottle but would like to donate please donate by check or through our Realm system. The final day for collecting the bottles is June 16th which is also Father’s Day. For more information about the Pregnancy Center please visit their website monroecountypregnancycenter.org/

Many Years!

Birthdays

- 1 John Savage
- 7 Heidi Hintermaier
- 7 Ion Munteanu
- 10 Toni Paglieri
- 12 Chris McCan
- 13 Michelle Marble
- 15 Nikki Williams
- 16 Olga Plummer
- 16 Tori Lopez
- 18 Joshua Marble
- 19 Andrew Ennis
- 20 Bianca Lee
- 24 Benita Muth

Anniversaries

- 30 George & Larysa Moore



Why Kneel Before God? - Purpose/Meaning of Kneeling Prayers of Pentecost

*By Fr. Richard of Saint George Greek Orthodox
Church, Saint Paul, MN*

How many of you have a dog? Even if you do not, you may notice dogs doing something around certain people, especially their owners. They often fall down to the ground and roll over onto their back. You may think they are looking for a good tummy rub but actually they are expressing of submission or obedience.

Orthodox Christians have a particular way of expressing our submission and obedience to God. We do this in a small way by bowing our heads. Repeatedly throughout the various worship services we hear the priest or deacon say, "Let us bow our heads to the Lord." This petition occurs right before a prayer in which we usually ask for something. We ask for things from God because we realize: 1) that we are powerless to obtain them and, 2) God has the power to grant/give them. Bowing our heads is physical way of expressing our words and emphasizing that we don't necessarily deserve what we ask for. In other words, bowing our heads is an expression of humility before God. "God you are greater than me. I need you."

In a greater way, we express our submission and obedience to God by bending our knees or kneeling. At every Divine Liturgy, during the Small Entrance of the Gospel, we sing "Come let us bow down to Christ and worship Him the Son of God..." It comes directly from Psalm 95:6-7 "Oh come let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His Hand." The

words used are "proskyneisomen" or "worship", and "prospesomen" which literally means "to fall down". (proskynetarion = shrine; proskynetis = pilgrim)

After the Divine Liturgy on the Sunday of Pentecost, we will serve the Vespers of Pentecost with the Kneeling Prayers. Before each Kneeling Prayer, the priest will say, "On bended knee let us pray to the Lord." What will we be asking for from God in these prayers?

The First Kneeling Prayer acknowledges that Jesus Christ Himself kneeled when praying to His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:41). The prayer goes on and we ask God to 1) Hear us, 2) Accept us, 3) Forget our sins, 4) Purge our sinful thoughts, 5) Make us worthy to return to Him, 6) Visit us, 7) Free us from the Devil, 8) Make our lives secure in His holy/sacred laws, 9) Entrust us to a guardian angel, 10) Gather us into His Kingdom, 11) Grant us forgiveness, 12) Cleanse us by the Holy Spirit.

In the Second Kneeling Prayer we ask God to 1) Teach us how to pray and what to pray for, 2) Govern my life, 3) Make known the way I should walk, 4) Grant wisdom, 5) Renew my spirit, 6) Make my mind firm, 7) Not be fooled by worldly delights, 8) To desire enjoyment of future/heavenly treasures, 9) Grant mercy, 10) Sanctify/make us holy, 11) Extend a helping hand, 12) Accept our prayer.

The Third Kneeling Prayer, interestingly, is for our departed loved ones, in which we ask God to: 1) Give rest to their souls, 2) Place their spirits/names in the book of life, and 3) Forgive their sins. No doubt this final prayer is also for us as we anticipate the time when we will leave this earthly life and join our departed loved ones.

Now kneeling down in worship in church and saying the words are only two of three components in being submissive, obedient and humble before God. The third element is the actions of our life once we walk up into the social hall and out the doors back to our homes and daily life. God will have a difficult time hearing us if we never talk to Him in prayer each day. He cannot accept us if we do come to Him. He cannot forget our sins if we keep committing the same ones over and over again. God cannot purge our sinful thoughts if we keep holding on to them. He cannot make our lives secure if we keep ignoring is sacred and holy commandments. He cannot forgive us if we do not forgive others.

God can cleanse us if we bathe in the Sacrament of Holy Confession. He can teach us how to pray and what to pray for if we regularly practice prayer. He can grant wisdom, renew our spirit and make our mind firm if we read daily from His required textbook—the Holy Bible. God extends His helping hand to us all the time, but we must make an effort to stretch out our hand to Him.

The last fifty days we have celebrated with great joy the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. As we remember His victory over sin and death, let us kneel down with the Apostles and Disciples, to receive the Paraklete, the Comforter, God's Holy Spirit. Let us remember that we too can be victorious over sin and spiritual death by joining ourselves to Christ, to become like Him. However, we can imitate Christ, we can have Him live in us, only by the power of the Holy Spirit. We can do nothing good without Christ and the Holy Spirit. Let us be inspired to wear holes in our pants and put callous on our knees as we fall down before God the Father. Let our hearts and minds also fall down in humility before the Holy Trinity and help us to be humble before our neighbor. Amen.



The Apostles Fast

Taken from www.orthodoxwiki.org

The Apostles Fast is short for us this year. We will be fasting from Monday, June 24 through Friday, June 28. Fr. Theophan will be out of town so we are commuting the celebration of the Apostles Peter and Paul to Sunday the 30th.

History of the Apostles Fast

Having rejoiced for fifty days following Pascha (Easter), the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Apostles began to prepare for their departure from Jerusalem to spread Christ's message. According to Sacred Tradition, as part of their preparation, they began a fast with prayer to ask God to strengthen their resolve and to be with them in their missionary undertakings.

The scriptural foundation for the Fast is found in the Synoptic Gospels, when the Pharisees criticized the apostles for not fasting. Jesus said to them, "Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast." [2] In the immediate sense, Christ was referring to his being taken to be crucified; but in the wider sense it is understood in terms of his Ascension into heaven and his commission to preach the Gospel, which can only be accomplished with prayer and fasting.

The tradition of the Fast has existed at least since Pope Leo I (461 AD), as is evidenced by his homilies, though it has subsequently been forgotten in the West. The Fast is thought to have been instituted out of thanksgiving to God for the witness of the apostles of Christ. With this Fast, believers express their thanks for the apostles' endurance of persecution during their mission.

June 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers
2 Blind Man 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape 12:20 pm Catechism	3	4 9am Morning Prayers	5 6pm Great Vespers or Vigil for Ascension	6 9am Divine Liturgy for Ascension 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	7	8 5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers
9 Fr's of 1 st Council 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape 12:20 pm Catechism	10	11 9am Morning Prayers	12 6pm Daily Vespers	13 9am Morning Prayers 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	14	15 6pm Vigil for Pentecost
16 Holy Pentecost 9:30am Christmations 10am Divine Liturgy Followed by Vespers of Pentecost	17 <i>Fr. Theophani Vacation through July 2</i>	18	19 6pm Readers Vespers	20	21	22 6pm Great Vespers
23 All Saints Fr. Seraphim Joa 9:40am Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	24 <i>Apostles Fast</i>	25	26 6pm Readers Vespers	27	28	29 6pm Great Vespers
30 Fr. Seraphim Joa 9:40am Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape						

Tentative July 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 9:40am Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	8 Tentative Church Floors Cleared	9 9am Morning Prayers - in parish hall Tentative Church Floors Cleared	10 6pm Daily Vespers in parish hall Tentative Church Floors Cleared	11 <i>Fr. Theophan off</i> Tentative Church Floors Cleared	12 <i>Fr. Theophan off</i> Tentative Church Floors Cleared	13 5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers
14 9:40am Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	15	16 9am Morning Prayers	17 6pm Daily Vespers	18 9am Morning Prayers 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	19	20 5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers
21 9:40am Hours 10am Divine Liturgy Followed by Car Blessing 12pm Agape	22 <i>Fr. Theophan and family @ DOS Assembly in Jupiter, FL through Friday</i>	23	24 6pm Readers Vespers	25 	26	27 5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers
28 9:40am Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	29	30	31 6pm Daily Vespers			