
ST. INNOCENT ORTHODOX CHURCH

JULY & AUGUST 2021 NEWSLETTER AND CALENDAR



Love and Repentance

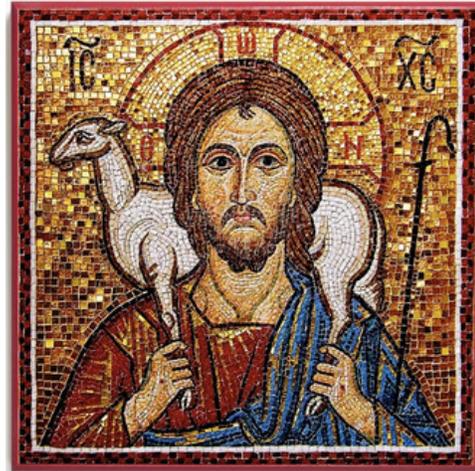
*by Fr. Theophan
A recent Monroe County
Reporter Pastor's Corner
Article*

One message that Christian Scriptures make clear is that although we are fallen and undeserving creatures, our God loves us. Jesus clearly states that “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (Jn. 3:16). Let’s not forget that the God-Man Jesus Christ partook of our flesh and blood and that He was willing to live, teach, and suffer on the Cross and die, “that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” (Heb 2:14-15). St. John tells us that “God is Love” (1Jn 4:7). What a beautiful and reassuring message!

Alongside this message of God's love and willingness to save us from sin and death, the Scriptures also tell us that the first message that Jesus preached was "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt 4:17). Repentance is to have a change of our heart and mind so that we abandon any unhealthy propensities and dispositions and to turn our heart and mind towards a healthy state of being (also called holiness). Isn't it interesting that the God who loves us at the same time wants us to undergo a fundamental change?

In our cultural dialog, I often hear about God's love but rarely hear about His desire for us to change. God is often presented as our creator who created us so that we can pursue happiness, validation, and good feelings about ourselves. Nowadays it would be shocking to tell people that biblically speaking God does not care about how your happiness or good feelings. For sure He wants what is best for you but what is best for you is to become like Him, not stay like you! In light of the modern tendency to turn God's love into a personal endorsement to do whatever I think is best, I think it might be helpful to list a few ways the love of God challenges us.

First of all, God loves you so much that He does not force you to love Him back. He gives you total freedom to accept or reject Him and to accept or reject His Gospel. There are natural consequences of rejecting God, of choosing darkness over light, but we have the freedom to choose.



He loves us so much, that He wants us to become authentically human by putting away sinful, disordered, passions and desires. God wants all of us to repent, not just once but perpetually as a lifestyle. He knows that we were born with all sorts of sinful propensities and yet he commands us to "Be holy for I am holy." The only way to do this is to empty ourselves of ourselves and pursue Christ and His commandments.

God loves us so much that He allows us to feel the emptiness of this world which lacks the sustenance to feed our spiritual hunger. This means that God loves you so much that at times He allows sufferings to come your way so that you will wake up, repent, and turn to Him for help.

Let's challenge ourselves to move beyond the self-validating self-help version of Christianity and to accept the challenge of God's love. Yes, God loves us, but His love is not meant to validate our brokenness. Rather, God's profound love for us is always a call to repentance and transformation.

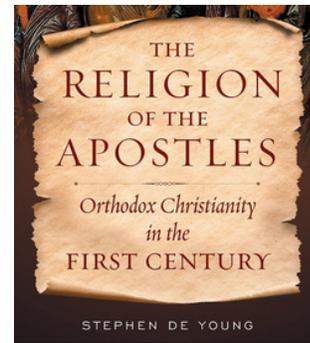
News and Upcoming events

- Fr Theophan and his Family will be on vacation from July 16-30th.
- Fr. Seraphim Joa will be filling in on July 17/18.
- Fr. Thaddeus Werner will be filling in on July 24/25.
- On Sunday, August 1st we will have a Cross procession and a blessing for Students and Teachers.
- The Dormition Fast starts on Sunday, August 1, and ends with the celebration of the Great Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos on the 15th. Orthodox Christians are asked to abstain from meat and dairy during the fast.
- Fr. Thaddeus Werner, Mat. Valerie and their sons, Sam, Joel, and Elias have moved to the Warner Robins area. On Sunday, August 15th we are planning a small welcome party, please bring some extra food for this feast.

23 Stephanie Curington
 24 Nadia Stephens
 26 Eric Olson
 27 James Andrews
 28 Maksimus Lickwar

Anniversaries

6 Fr. Theophan & Pres. Elena Buck
 13 John & Heidi Hintermaier
 15 Barry & Bianca Lee
 20 Linda & Paul Tutcher
 20 Olga & Peter Uchakin
 27 Allen & Leann Almquist
 29 Jamie Fernandez



Many Years!

July Birthdays

5 Radu Malcoci
 7 Jacqueline Stephens
 8 Shawn Mercer
 9 Michael Dykes
 11 Taisiya Collins
 12 John Hintermaier
 21 Alexei Yankovsky
 22 Jacob Hintermaier
 28 Raph Graves
 28 Sandi Wilcox

Anniversary

10 David & Muryah Scouten

August Birthdays

1 Phoebe Andrews
 2 Mason Hough
 8 Susie Savage
 11 Rachel Marble
 13 Seraphin Curington
 14 Jacob Plummer
 18 Dimetri Lickwar

New Book Group!

Many have requested that we spend some time talking about this new book by Fr. Stephen DE Young. It is not an easy-reader but it is chocked full of connections between the Old Testament Hebraic faith and the New Testament fulfillment in Christ. Here is the description from Ancient Faith Publishing:

Father Dr. Stephen De Young traces the lineage of Orthodox Christianity back to the faith and witness of the apostles, which was rooted in a first-century Jewish worldview. The Religion of the Apostles presents the Orthodox Christian Church of today as a continuation of the religious life of the apostles, which in turn was a continuation of the life of the people of God since the beginning of creation.

This book group will meet via Zoom on Tuesdays starting on August 3rd. The Zoom Link and reading schedule will be posted on Realm. Come and join the conversation!

Family Fasting Tips for the Dormition Fast

By Sarah Wright, author of OrthodoxMotherhood.com

Summer is almost over. Back to school sales abound. Teachers are busy prepping rooms, lessons, and materials. And children everywhere are getting in the last bits of vacation that they can.

In the Church we have another sign that summer is nearly over—the Dormition Fast begins. In the Orthodox Church, we observe this fast from August 1st to August 15th in preparation for the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos. This is the feast where we remember the falling asleep of the Mother of God.

As with other fasts, during this time Orthodox Christians abstain from all meat, dairy, oil, and wine. We simplify our diets in order to focus on the spiritual life. If you will be participating in the Dormition Fast, here are a few tips that may help you and your family:

1. Keep Meals Simple

During fasting seasons, we are called to simplify our meals and focus on the spiritual realities of life. This can be hard to do if we are constantly trying to research great-tasting fasting meals, finding substitutes for our favorite treats, or spending hours in the kitchen each day. My advice? Keep the meals extremely simple and inexpensive.

Our family will be eating a lot of fresh produce (one of the best things about fasting at this time of the year!). We're talking corn on the cob, salads, peaches and other fruits, etc. I try to add a bit of protein to each meal with some beans or nuts. One of our favorite meals is beans and rice with grilled veggie kabobs. So easy and so tasty!

2. Try to Lower Your Grocery Bill and Give the Difference

During the fasting seasons, the Church invites the faithful to enter more deeply into a life of prayer and almsgiving. One easy way to do this is to eat more simply and inexpensively during

this time. Then, we can give the money that was saved to the poor.

For example, we currently have a \$100 a week grocery budget in our house. If I can manage to save \$20 each week since I won't be buying dairy and meat, we can give \$40 to our church or a charity. We could even use that money to buy canned goods to donate to a local food bank.

3. STUDY THE LIFE OF THE THEOTOKOS TOGETHER AS A FAMILY

It's important to remember that fasting is not all about the food. We abstain from foods as we try to abstain from sin. We also focus our attention on the spiritual disciplines. One great discipline to practice as a family is that of spiritual study. Read the Bible or Bible stories at meal times, read the lives of the saints, and study spiritual texts.

This year during the Dormition Fast, I want to help my children learn more about the Theotokos. I hope to read passages in Scripture that foreshadow her role, read children's books about her birth and early life, and read from the Tradition about her death.

4. Pray Together More Frequently

The fasts are also a good time to start, renew, or revamp your family prayer routine. If you currently do not pray together as a family, perhaps you could start praying at mealtimes. If you pray before dinner, could you try to pray the Evening Prayers together afterward? If your Evening Prayer routine is solid, what about trying to begin a habit of Morning Prayers?

5. Make Plans to Attend the Vigil and Liturgy for the Feast of the Dormition

Finally, the fast is not an end unto itself. Fasting is designed to help us enter more fully into a feast of the church—in this case the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos. Therefore it's important to complete the fast by attending Divine Liturgy for the feast. Take a look at your family schedule and begin to clear out a couple of hours for this important feast.



The Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos

From the Tradition of the Church

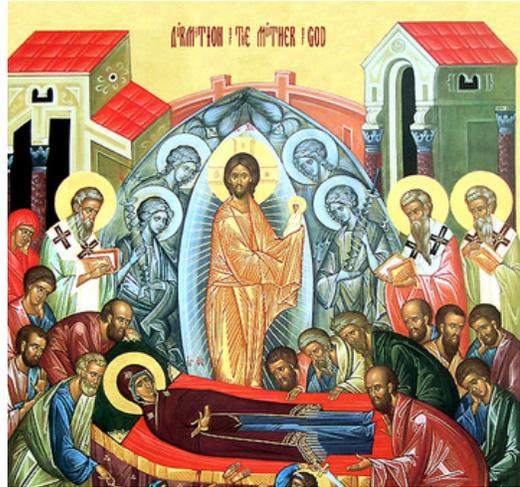
Following the day of Pentecost, the Theotokos remained in the city of Jerusalem, comforting the infant Christian community. She was living in the house of the beloved Apostle John, later the Evangelist. At the time of her death (tradition states she was in her early fifties) many of the Apostles were scattered throughout the world preaching the Gospel. All but Thomas were miraculously brought to the Virgin aloft on clouds.

As they stood around her bedside, she commended her spirit to the Lord and Jesus descended from Heaven, taking up her soul in His arms. The Apostles sang the funeral hymns in her honor and carried her body to a tomb in Cedron near Gethsemane. When a Jewish man tried to interrupt their solemn procession, an angel of the Lord came and punished him by cutting off his hands, which were later healed.

The Apostle Thomas arrived on the third day and wished to see the Virgin for the last time. They discovered an empty tomb. Church tradition relates that the Theotokos was resurrected bodily and taken to heaven, the same reward that awaits all the righteous on the Last Day.

—

The Feast of the Dormition or Falling Asleep of the Theotokos commemorates the death, resurrection, and glorification of Christ's mother. To help us in our preparation of the feast, it is preceded by a two week fast. As with the Nativity of the Virgin (September 8/21) and the feast of her Entrance to the Temple (November 21/December 4), the Feast of the Dormition also comes from the Tradition of the Church.



There we learn that Mary died as all people die because she had a mortal human nature affected by the corruption of this world. The Church proclaims that Mary needed to be saved by Christ just as all of us are saved from trials, sufferings, and death of this world. Having truly died, she was raised by her Son as the "Mother of Life" and already participates in the eternal life of paradise which is prepared and promised to all who "hear the word of God and keep it." (Luke 11:27-28) Finally, we celebrate the fact that what happens to Mary happens to all who imitate her holy life of humility, obedience and love.

It is important to remember that there are no relics of the Theotokos. Their existence has never been mentioned throughout history. At one time in Constantinople there was a center of pilgrimage where the belt and veil of the Virgin were venerated.

*Adapted from The Orthodox Church, Volume II: Worship, by
Fr. Thomas Hopko.*

At St. Innocent, we will celebrate the Feast with Vigil on Saturday the 14th. At St. Innocent, we do a special service as part of the Vigil called the Lamentations which mirror the Holy Saturday service to Christ. Flowers are blessed at the end of the Liturgy. People keep them in their homes and during times of family strife or illness, the flower petals are placed in the censor with the incense, and the whole house is censured.

The Three Feasts of our Saviour in August

Adapted from an article by Valentina Kolesnikova

Did you know?

In August the Orthodox Church celebrates three feast days, directly or indirectly connected with events in the earthly life of Christ the Savior. They are: the origins of the honored wood of the life-giving Savior's Cross (1st); the great feast of the Transfiguration of the Savior (6th); and the bringing from Edessa to Constantinople of the image of the Lord not made by human hand (16th). These feasts are known popularly as Savior of Honey or the Water, Savior of the Apples, and The Savior on Linen Cloth.

At the end of summer and beginning of autumn, pagan Russian farmers and their Christian descendants had the same agricultural concerns and protective rites. Both aimed to banish evil from or protect from evil the harvest, livestock and land, and appease the good forces of nature and the cosmos. The end of summer meant the end of work in the fields —peasants got recompense from their spring and summer labors, and now they had to think about next year's harvest and sow the winter cereals.

There was a saying in old Rus': "Savior the First is the first sowing." In order to guarantee a future good harvest, peasants brought seeds to the church that day. Before the start of the sowing, priests would sprinkle the fields with holy water and bless the wells. The other name, Savior of Honey, derives from the cutting and breaking of the combs. The first cut honeycombs were taken to the church to be blessed and also to the funerals of parents. On the same day, all over Rus', an ancient pre-Christian ritual of the cleansing of water took place — everyone old and young, and after them livestock, bathed in rivers, lakes and ponds blessed by the priests. It was believed that this would protect the people and animals from evil spirits, curses and other ills.

At St. Innocent we will be celebrating two of these three feasts of our Savior. On Sunday, August 1st we will process with the cross at the end of the Divine Liturgy. One of the reasons for the procession of of the Cross in ancient times was to ward off the various sicknesses of summer. We certainly need our Lord to keep the sicknesses away, especially after last year! You are welcome to bring Honey if you want it blessed. Additionally, we will be blessing teachers and students this day.



On August 5th we will serve Vigil for the Feast of our Lord's Transfiguration and on August 6th we will celebrate the Festal Divine Liturgy. In continuation of the Old Testament custom, the fruits of the earth are blessed on Transfiguration, the heads of wheat and grapes. In Russia, grapes were less common so apples were substituted. After the Liturgy on the 6th we will bless whatever fruit you bring!





JULY 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Jun 27 All Saints <i>Fr. Seraphim Joa</i> <i>visiting priest</i> 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship	Jun 28	Jun 29 Ss. Peter & Paul	Jun 30 6:00pm Readers Vespers	1	2 St. John Maximovich	3 1:30pm Catechism 13 3pm Catechism 2 5:00pm Sacrament of Confession 6:00pm Great Vespers
4 All Saints of America 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship	5	6	7 6:00pm Daily Vespers	8	9	10 5:00pm Sacrament of Confession 6:00pm Great Vespers
11 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship	12 7pm Parish Council Meeting	13	14 6:00pm Daily Vespers 7:00pm Benedict Option Book Study	15 St. Vladimir	16 Fr. Theophan on Vacation through June 30th	17 6:00pm Great Vespers
18 Fr. Seraphim Joa <i>guest priest</i> 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship	19	20 Prophet Elijah	21 6:00pm Readers Vespers	22	23	24 6:00pm Great Vespers
25 Dormition of Anna Fr. Thaddeus Werner <i>guest priest</i> 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship	26	27	28 6:00pm Readers Vespers	29	30	31 1:30pm Catechism 14 3pm Catechism 3 5 pm Sacrament of Confession 6:00pm Great Vespers



AUGUST 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1</p> <p>Procession of the Cross</p> <p>9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours</p> <p>10:00am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>Blessing of Teachers and Students</p> <p>11:45am Food and Fellowship</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>7pm Religion of the Apostles Book group</p>	<p>4</p> <p>6:00pm Paraklesis</p>	<p>5</p> <p>6pm Vigil for Transfiguration</p>	<p>6</p> <p>TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD</p> <p>9am Divine Liturgy for Transfiguration</p>	<p>7</p> <p>5:00pm Sacrament of Confession</p> <p>6:00pm Great Vespers</p>
<p>8</p> <p>9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours</p> <p>10:00am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>11:45am Food and Fellowship</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <p>7pm Religion of the Apostles Book group</p>	<p>11</p> <p>6:00pm Paraklesis</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p> <p>1:30pm Catechism 15</p> <p>3pm Catechism 4</p> <p>5:00pm Sacrament of Confession</p> <p>6:00pm Vigil for the Feast of Dormition</p>
<p>15</p> <p>DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS</p> <p>9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours</p> <p>10:00am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>11:45am Welcome Party for Fr. Thaddeus and his family</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> <p>7pm Religion of the Apostles Book group</p>	<p>18</p> <p>6:00pm Daily Vespers</p> <p>7pm Parish Council Meeting</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p> <p>5:00pm Sacrament of Confession</p> <p>6:00pm Great Vespers</p>
<p>22</p> <p>9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours</p> <p>10:00am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>11:45am Food and Fellowship</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>7pm Religion of the Apostles Book group</p>	<p>25</p> <p>6:00pm Daily Vespers</p> <p>7pm OCLI Meeting (tentative)</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p> <p>1:30pm Catechism 16</p> <p>3pm Catechism 5</p> <p>5:00pm Sacrament of Confession</p> <p>6:00pm Great Vespers</p>
<p>29</p> <p>Beheading of the Baptist</p> <p>9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours</p> <p>10:00am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>11:45am Food and Fellowship</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p> <p>6:00pm Great Vespers</p> <p>7pm Religion of the Apostles Book group</p>	<p>Sep 1</p> <p>The Church New Year</p> <p>9am Divine Liturgy for the Church New Year</p>	<p>Sep 2</p>	<p>Sep 3</p>	<p>Sep 4</p> <p>5:00pm Sacrament of Confession</p> <p>6:00pm Great Vespers</p>