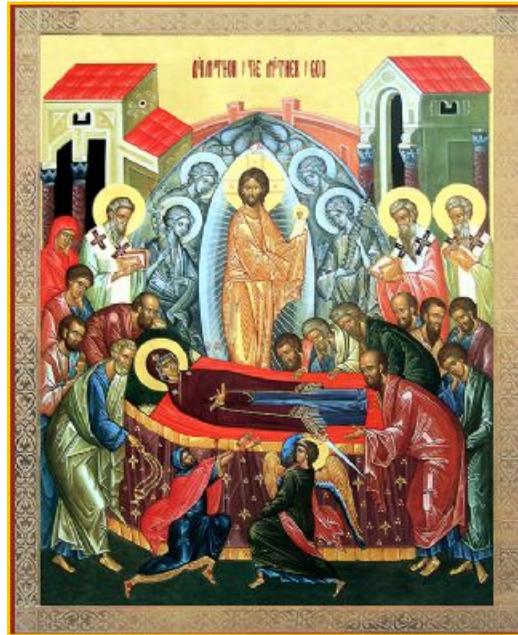


Our Ladder from Earth to Heaven

This weekly bulletin insert complements the curriculum published by the Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America. This and many other Christian Education resources are available at <http://dce.oca.org>.



The Feast of the Dormition (or Falling Asleep) of the Theotokos is celebrated each year on August 15th.

A hymn of the feast tells us that Mary, after dying as we all do, had the unique experience of being "translated to life by the One who dwelt in her virginal womb." Mary was taken to paradise by her Son. She immediately entered the eternal life that has been prepared for the future of everyone who follows her example of faithful obedience to God.

Having lived as a human being like us, the Mother of God now shows us the way to everlasting life with God. The festal hymns also tell us that as heaven receives her, the angels join the apostles in gazing at her with awe.

A different view of angels is depicted in a 1987 German movie entitled "Wings of Desire." The recently-deceased actor Peter Falk, probably best known as the TV detective Columbo, was featured in the movie, and obituaries have included discussion of its content and meaning.

The movie's lead character is Damiel, an angel who (invisibly) watches with loving care over the human inhabitants of Berlin. He helps and comforts people when he can, and pays close attention to the things they do and feel. But Damiel is not happy. He tells another angel that he has become dissatisfied with his inability to share in human life, to physically feel the weight of an object in his hand, or to bleed from a cut.

The dissatisfaction grows after a conversation with Falk, whose unnamed character can see Damiel as others cannot because he himself is a former angel. Falk's character tells him how good it feels to rub one's hands together to warm them, or to enjoy a cup of coffee with another person. He encourages Damiel to make the change from angel to human. Damiel does so, and finds love with a trapeze artist to whom he has always been attracted while keeping watch over her life.

"Wings of Desire" seems to be making the point that a purely spiritual life, the life of angels, could never be as satisfying as human life with all its "real" problems and joys. But the Church is telling us something quite different in the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos.

We will never be angels, and should refrain from telling children that a person who has died is now an angel; that is not the Church's teaching. Rather, we are called to life in its fullness. Having completed our life on earth, with all the pleasures the movie describes, we are offered the greater gift of eternal life with our Creator.

It's not for us to speculate that angels are dissatisfied with their lives. But we needn't be dissatisfied with ours. The Theotokos did what God asked her to do, as we all can. And for doing that she is called "more honorable than the cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim"—the highest angels of all.



St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Christian Church

108 East Main Street

PO Box 134

Clinton, CT 06413

Scripture Readings

1 Corinthians 4:9-16

Matthew 17:14-23

Commemorations

Leavetaking of the Transfiguration.
St. Tikhon, Bishop of Vorónezh,
Wonderworker of Zadónsk and All
Russia (1783). Translation of the
Relics of St. Maximus the
Confessor (662). Uncovering of
the Relics of Ven. Maxim of
Moscow, Fool-for-Christ (ca. 1547).
Martyr Hippolytus of Rome and
those with him: Martyr Concordia,
Irenæus, and Abundius (258).

Information

Rev. Steven Hosking, attached
frsteve@stalexischurch.org
860.664.9434 (church)
860.866.5802 (message)
www.stalexischurch.org



Welcome to our Guests

We welcome all visitors to our Divine Liturgy and services. While Holy Communion may only be received by prepared Orthodox Christians, our non-Orthodox guests are welcome to participate in our prayers and hymns and to join us in venerating the Cross and receiving blessed bread at the conclusion of the Liturgy. Please sign our guest card and join us for refreshments and fellowship after the services.

Feel free to ask questions before or after the services. Any member of our Council or Congregation are glad to assist you. Literature about the Orthodox faith and this parish can be found in the narthex (back of the Church).

Our Parish Council Representatives are:

President - Susan Hayes
Vice President - Deborah Bray
Secretary - SubDeacon Joseph Brubaker
Treasurer - Susan Egan
Member at Large - James Pepitone
Member at Large - Demetra Tolis



This week's services and events

Monday, August 14, 2017

6:30p - Vespers Divine Liturgy for the
Dormition of Most Holy Lady Theotokos

Tuesday, August 15, 2017

8:30a - Akathist for the Dormition

9:00a - Study of the Sacraments

Wednesday, August 16, 2017

4:30p - Open Doors

6:30p - Daily Vespers

Thursday, August 17, 2017

8:30a - Daily Matins

7:00p - Study of the Sacraments

Saturday, August 19, 2017

9:30a - Divine Liturgy at St Nicholas

5:30p - Great Vespers

Sunday, August 20, 2017

9:30a - Divine Liturgy

Evangelism and Outreach Ministry

Announcements

On Wednesday, August 23rd at 6:30p, I will be holding a Service for Healing, an Unction Service, for the parish community. All Orthodox faithful are encouraged to attend.

Please continue to pray for...

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Please continue to pray for...

Subdeacon Joseph, Sophia, Deborah, Robert, Ann, Daria, Dori, John, Evelyn, June, Nina, Joan, John, Alex, Alan, Luke, Kathryn, Anastasia, Glenn, Veronica, Darlyne, Irene, Nancy, Dionysian, Elena, Jevon, Ivan and Joscean. And for... John, Jennifer, Nicholas, Isabel, Elizabeth, John, Jordan, Michael, Lee, Eva, Neil, Gina, Joey, Michael, Madelyn, Sofie, Katrina, Olena, Valeriy, Olga, Tatiana, Dimitri, Alexander and Maxim.

This week we celebrate:

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Deborah Bray, Stasia PenkoffLidbeck and Samuel Jankura, on the occasion of their birthdays.

Simple words on the Transfiguration

An anonymous monk from Russia connects the prayer of Jesus with the Transfiguration

“The name of Jesus helps us to transfigure the world into Christ (without pantheistic confusion)... What we call the inanimate world is carried along by a Christward movement... By pronouncing the name of Jesus upon the natural things, upon a stone or a tree or a fruit or a flower, the sea or a landscape, or whatever it is, the believer speaks allowed the secret of these things....

The animal world may also be transfigured by us... If we invoke the name of Jesus upon the animals, we give them back their primitive dignity which we so easily forget – the dignity of living beings... In Jesus... It is mainly in relation to men that we can exercise a mystery of transfiguration. The Risen Christ appeared to several times under an aspect which was no longer the one is disciples new... It was each time in the form of an ordinary man such as we might meet in our everyday lives. Jesus thus illustrates an important aspect of His presence among us – His presence in men. He was thus completing what he taught: ‘I was hungry and you gave me meat. I was thirsty and you gave me drink... Inasmuch as you have done it unto the least of these my brothers, you have done it to me’... Everybody can... At any time and in any place, see the face of our Lord. Men today are realistically minded... And when holy men tell them: ‘we have seen the Lord’. They answer with Thomas: ‘unless I put my hand into his side I will not believe.’ Jesus accepts this challenge. He allows himself to be seen, and touched, and spoken to... Jesus shows us the poor, the sick, the center and all men, and tells us: Behold my hands and feet... Handled me and see me: for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, the hands, feet, insides of Christ – His Mystical Body. In them we experience the reality of the resurrection. Transfiguration and Real Presence “though without confusion of essence” of the Lord Jesus... The name of Jesus is concrete and powerful as a means of Transfiguration men into their hidden, innermost, utmost reality. We should approach all men... With His name... In our hearts... Name them with His name... Adore Christ in them... Serve Christ in them. In many of these men and women Jesus is imprisoned – deliver Him silently recognizing and worshiping Him in them. If we go through the world with this new vision, saying Jesus over every man, seeing Jesus in every man, everybody and everything will be transformed and transfigured.

Through invoking the name of Jesus the person awakens to the non-dual, Theocentric cosmos where the uncreated Light overshadows and encloses all in all within itself. Abandoning himself to God, he awakes to the presence of God within himself and all creation... The Orthodox does not think about salvation in terms of the individual soul returning to its Maker. It visualizes rather, a gradual process of transfiguration of the whole cosmos culminating in deification... Man is saved not from the world but with the world.”