

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you.” Jesus gives His peace. He does not loan it; He does not take it back. The peace that is in Jesus “My peace” becomes the disciples’ final possession.

The Savior gives His disciples His peace at the moment when His Passion is about to begin. When He is confronted with the vision of immediate suffering and death, He proclaims and communicates His peace. If at such moments, Jesus is the Master of Peace, then the strength of this peace will not abandon the disciple in moments of lesser strife.

“But I say to you, do not resist evil.” How scandalous and foolish is this statement in the eyes of men, and especially of unbelievers? How do we interpret this commandment about turning the left cheek to the one who struck the right, giving our cloak to the one who took our tunic, walking two miles with the one who forced us to go one mile already, giving a blessing to him who curses us? Have we explored the ways and means of loving our enemy whether he be a personal or public enemy? “You do not know of what spirit you are.”

No, it is a question of resisting the Gospel. The choice is not between fighting and not fighting, but between fighting and suffering. Fighting brings about only vain and illusory victories, because Jesus is the absolute reality. Suffering without resistance proclaims the absolute reality of Jesus. If we understand this point, we see that suffering is a real victory. Jesus said “It is enough” when His disciples presented Him with two swords. The disciples had not understood the meaning of Christ’s statement, “He who does not have a purse, let him sell his coat and buy a sword.” What Christ meant was that there are times when we must sacrifice what seems the most ordinary thing, in order to concentrate our attention on the assaults of the evil one. But defense and attack are both spiritual.

Jesus goes out to the front of the soldiers, who with their torches and weapons, want to lay hands on Him. He goes freely, spontaneously, to His passion and His suffering. Jesus cures the servant whose ear had been cut off by the sword of a disciple. Not only is Jesus unwilling that His disciple defend Him by force, but He repairs the damage that the sword has caused. It is the only miracle that Jesus performed during His passion.

The example of non-resistance that Jesus gave does not mean that He consents to evil, or that He remains merely passive. It is a positive reaction. It is the reply of the love that Jesus incarnates, opposed to the enterprises of the wicked. The immediate result seems to be the victory of evil. In the long run, however, the power of this love is the strongest.

The Resurrection followed the Passion. The non-resistance of the martyrs wore out and inspired the persecutors themselves. It is the shedding of blood by the martyrs that has guaranteed the spread of the Gospel. Is this a weak and vague pacifism? NO, it is a burning and victorious flame. If Jesus, at Gethsemane, had asked His Father for the help of twelve legions of angels, there would have been no Easter or Pentecost and no salvation for us! IC

Excerpted and edited from a larger work entitled *A Dialogue with the Savior*. Fr. Lev is best known as A Monk of the Eastern Church, as he often preferred not to identify himself by name in his writings.

St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Christian Church

108 East Main Street

PO Box 134

Clinton, CT 06413

Scripture Readings

1 Corinthians 9:2-12

Matthew 18:23-35

Commemorations

Afterfeast of the Dormition.

Prophet Samuel (11th c. B.C.).

Hieromartyr Philip, Bishop of
Heraclius, and with him Martyrs

Severus, Memnon, and 37
soldiers in Thrace (3rd c.).

Martyr Heliodorus (380).



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

Information

Rev. Steven Hosking, attached

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Please continue to pray for...

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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:

Skip Bray, Kaitlyn Luft, Kyle Hollis, Susan Egan, Theo Freeman and Ed Hayes on the occasion of their birthdays.

Fr Steven and Mat. Anne on the occasion of their anniversary.

This week's services and events

Tuesday, August 22, 2017

8:30a - Akathist for the Dormition
Study of the Sacraments

Wednesday, August 23, 2017

4:30p - Open Doors
6:30p - Service of Healing

Thursday, August 24, 2017

8:30a - Daily Matins
7:00p - Study of the Sacraments

Saturday, August 26, 2017

5:30p - Great Vespers

Sunday, August 27, 2017

9:30a - Divine Liturgy
Building and Grounds Ministry

Announcements

Wednesday, Sept 6th - Soup Kitchen

Saturday, Sept 9th, 1p to 3p - Parish Picnic - weather permitting, Vespers will be held outside at the Pavilion at 3p

Saturday, Sept, 16th - Parish Tag Sale

For the remainder of August, the town of Clinton is sponsoring a school supplies collection. Please see the electronic-bulletin for more details.

Prayer for Our Enemies

Lord Jesus,

You commanded us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us that we may be truly children of our Father in Heaven, Who causes the sun to rise on those who are evil and those who are good, and rain to fall on both the righteous and the unrighteous: we beg You – fill our minds and hearts with Your Holy Spirit that we may forgive those who persecute and murder our brothers and sisters as You forgave those who crucified You.

Help us to repay their evil with goodness that we might not be overcome by evil but conquer evil with good. Deliver us from anger and a desire for vengeance.

As Your first martyr Stephen prayed to You for his murderers, so we pray for all those who fight in the name of ISIS ('white nationalism', and other extremism): enlighten their minds and hearts that they might come to know You, the only true God, and Your love for all humankind made manifest in Your Cross. Lead them to repent of their many sins, having defiled themselves with the blood of their many innocent victims and having handed their own souls over to the darkness of the Evil One. Do not let them perish. Have mercy on them and forgive them, for they do not know You or the Father Who sent You, and know not what they do.

For blessed is Your holy Name, O Christ our God, and to You do we offer glory, honor and worship, together with Your eternal Father and Your Holy Spirit, the one true and living God, always now and forever and to the ages of ages.

Amen.

Prayer for Believers to Turn from Violence and be Reconciled

Let all believers turn aside from violence and do what makes for peace. By the strength of your powerful arm save your people and your Holy Church from all evil oppression; hear the supplications of all who call to you in sorrow and affliction, day and night, O merciful God, let their lives not be lost, we pray you, hear us and have mercy on us.

But grant, O Lord, peace, love and speedy reconciliation to your people whom you have redeemed with your precious blood. Make your presence known to those who have turned away from you and do not seek you, so that none of them may be lost, but all may be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, so that everyone, in true harmony and love, O long-suffering Lord, may praise your all holy Name.