

ST OLYMPIA ORTHODOX CHURCH

POTSDAM, NEW YORK 13676

ORTHODOX CHURCH OF AMERICA
DIOCESE OF NY AND NJ



**Welcome to St. Olympia Orthodox Church,
a young and, God willing, growing community of worshippers.**

**Our priest is Fr. Peter Irfan, Acting Rector.
You may reach him at 716-342-8520 (cell) or at faterpeter777@yahoo.com.**

**Please join us for prayer and fellowship.
Divine Liturgies are held every Sunday at 10 am.
Great Vespers are held every Saturday evening at 5 pm.**

Next Services

**Tuesday, August 14th
Great Vespers of the
Dormition in Ottawa
Parish Pilgrimage —>**

**Wednesday, August 15th
Dormition of the
Theotokos**

**Divine Liturgy
10:00 am**

**Saturday, August 18th
Great Vespers
5:00 pm**

**Sunday, August 19th
Matins
9:30 am
(Summer hours)**

**Divine Liturgy
10:00 am**

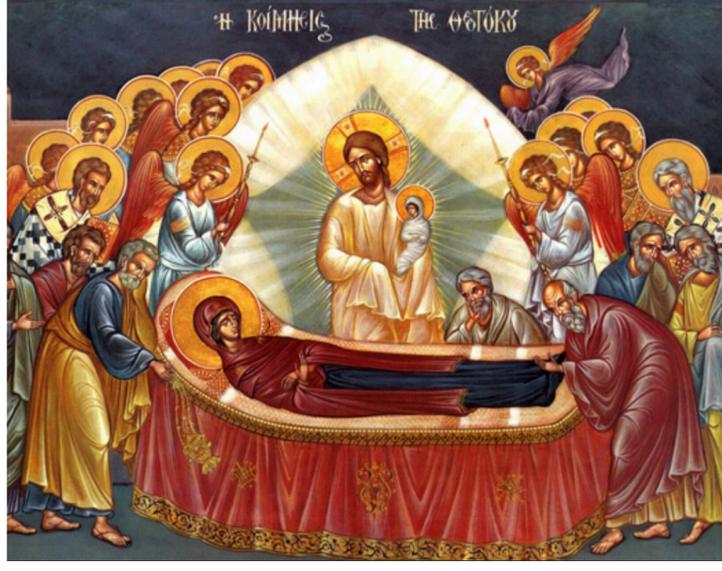
**at
St. Olympia Chapel
123 Main Street
Potsdam, NY**

Parish Pilgrimage

Our Parish will make a Pilgrimage to the Dormition of the Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church in Ottawa, to celebrate Great Vespers for the feast day of their parish on Tuesday, August 14th. Carpools will leave at 1:30 pm. Their Greek Festival will be in full swing following the service! Friends and family welcome.

Phone Cindy Eyer at (315) 771-7579 or e-mail ceyer@twcny.rr.com to join the carpool group. You must have appropriate ID to cross into Canada.

Also, Divine Liturgy for the feast will be celebrated at St. Olympia Chapel on Wednesday, August 15th at 10 am.



For Orthodox Christians, August 15th commemorates the Dormition of Mary, the Mother of God, the Theotokos (lit. God-Bearer). "Dormition" means "falling asleep." In Greek, the word is "Koimosis," and it is from this word that "cemetery" is derived. Traditional Orthodox icons of the Dormition, therefore, focus especially on her death and burial. The disciples surround her, grieving and lamenting. However, behind this Christ stands glorified, depicted within a mandorla (an often almond-shaped area of light), an iconographic sign of something not physically seen, or seen by all, but revealed (c.f. icons of the Descent into Hades or the Transfiguration). In Christ's arms, swaddled in radiant white, is a child--an iconographic image of him holding his mother's soul. This is a purposeful reversal of the many icons that guard the truth of the Incarnation--that of mother holding Child. Here it affirms her birth into Eternal Life.

St. Olympia Orthodox Church in the News

Our Vehicle Blessing Service was covered by: <http://www.ogd.com/dco/emergency-vehicles-blessed-during-special-sunday-service-in-potsdam-20180807> and <http://northcountrynow.com/news/sunday-blessing-potsdam-emergency-vehicles-0240194>

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 9:2-12

*Note: the following article has been written by an anonymous contributor.
It is included here by permission.*

Psalm 119:105 gives thanks to God that "Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light to my path," while 2 Timothy 3:16 assures us that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." No wonder, then, that you and I are often urged to turned to the pages of Sacred Scripture when we have questions about right and wrong, questions about what God's will may be for our life or situation, questions about God's solution to some problem we have. And so we should. Nearly 300 years ago St. Tikhon of Zadonsk said that "Whenever you read the Gospel, Christ Himself is speaking to you. And while you read, you are praying and talking to Him."

But the reality of our life is that we are going to run into issues which are not explicitly or directly covered in any one passage of Scripture. Back in my childhood, when television was brand-new, in our staunchly evangelical Protestant town there was fierce controversy between neighbors, even between members of the same church, over whether or not a "faithful" Christian should watch TV. For both sides, it was Bible verses at 20 paces. But clearly, the issue was not addressed directly in Scripture. So how do we handle these topics without wandering off into a purely personal opinion shaped by our own passions and/or embracing worldly values and principles which contradict Scripture? If there are not specific Scriptures, are there at least scriptural principles which we can apply?

Well, firstly, let's be clear that content counts more than chapter and verse. When I was a kid, some of my Evangelical Protestant playmates talked about "sword drills," which I thought sounded swashbuckling and exciting--until I learned the term referred, not to playing with real swords, but to memorizing Scripture verses and being able to cite them by chapter and verse. Well, memorizing Scripture is actually important in forming our understanding of the Gospel and in forming our conscience; Psalm 119:11 rightly says, "Your word have I hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You." But what counts is more the content of the Scriptures and less the citation; it's less about where we find God's teaching than about what it is that God is teaching us to make us "complete, equipped for every good work." So, while memorizing Scripture is always a good thing, it's more important to read, understand, accept, internalize and apply what the Scripture says.

Secondly, biblical principles often have an application broader than the immediate text. The application of biblical principles to everyday life requires both understanding and wisdom, because sometimes a principle from one biblical context may apply across a broader range of modern contexts. For example, in Exodus 20:14 God commands, "You shall not commit adultery." So that means that if neither party is married to somebody else, anything goes, right? Not hardly! As our Lord makes clear in Matthew 5:28, the commandment deals with the proper use of God's gift of human sexuality according to our state in life: "I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." Similarly, the commandment in Exodus 20:13, "You shall not murder" extends beyond the taking of human life to any kind of violence directed at the human person, including emotional and verbal abuse, like bullying.

Another example that some folks try to dance around is found in today's Epistle, 1 Corinthians 9:2-12. In verses 9-10, St. Paul's quotes the law of Moses in Deuteronomy 25:4, "You shall not muzzle the ox while it treads the grain." While the ox was being used to thresh the grain, it had the right to munch on some of the grain. But then Paul asks, "Is it oxen God is concerned about?" And the answer, of course, is "No." God also enunciates that principle "altogether for our sakes," as a matter of financial support for pastors, making the point that, as he says later, in verse 14, "those who preach the Gospel should live [make their living] from the Gospel." And note please that Paul was applying the principle to a broader context. Unlike some "untaught and unstable" folks then and now who, as another Apostle complains in 2 Peter 3:16, "twist [Paul's teaching] to their own destruction," St. Paul did not play games with the Scripture, but took the clear meaning of the basic principle and applied it to the wider context of the life of the Christian community. Again, a biblical principle can have much broader application than its narrow context, if we are cautious with our application.

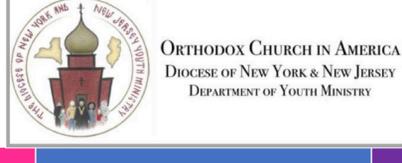
Thirdly, it's not always cut and dried. Scripture is not always simple and straightforward. Sometimes there are seeming inconsistencies between different texts; but despite our best scholarship, sometimes we have to be satisfied with leaving the tension of apparent contradiction unrelieved. One small example is the Lord's genealogy in Matthew 1:1-16 and His genealogy in Luke 3:23-38. Matthew says Joseph's father was Jacob; Luke says his father was Heli. Which was it? We do not and cannot know with absolute certainty. So we just have to live with it, trusting that if this were something we really needed to know for our salvation, God would've told us.

Note, though, those words "seeming inconsistencies." Consider the apparent contradiction between Ephesians 2:8-9, which teaches that "by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast;" and James 2:24, which insists that "a man is justified by works, and not by faith only." Martin Luther, who emphasized justification by faith, grumbled that James was "a straw epistle." But the contradiction was only apparent. For James, you see, "faith" meant the intellectual content, the facts, of the Gospel, as we see in his comment, "You believe that there is one God. You do well [Big whoop!]. Even the demons believe--and tremble!" The demons don't just believe; they know with absolute certainty that "there is one God;" but what good does it do them as long as they refuse to repent? For Paul, on the other hand, "faith" meant not just knowing the facts but trusting both those truths and the God, Who is truth with one's very soul. These two texts, then, are not contradictory, but just two facets of one and the same jewel, God's gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.

But our human ability to see only part of the picture not only demands humility but also requires us to be on our guard against substituting eisegesis for exegesis. Huh? "Exegesis" means taking the application from the plain meaning of the text, and from comparing one text with another, not just pulling out a particular verse and making it the whole story. "Eisegesis" means reading into the text what I want the meaning to be. Can I read the Psalms, for example, and find there the Psalmist asking God to pound his enemies into the dust? One Sicilian favorite is Psalm 109:6-13, where a super-honked-off King David prays, "Set a wicked man over him, and let an accuser stand at his right hand. When he is judged, let him be found guilty, and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few, and let another take his office. Let their children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children continually be vagabonds, and beg; let them seek their bread also from their desolate places. Let the creditor seize all that he has, and let strangers plunder his labor. Let there be none to extend mercy to him, nor let there be any to favor his fatherless children. Let his posterity be cut off, and in the generation following let their name be blotted out." So does that mean it's biblical and right for me to pray that same kind of prayer against my enemy? No; not if I'm a follower of Jesus Christ; not if I take the Bible as a whole; not if I heed our Lord's command, "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you." Playing pick-a-passage, and/or taking verses out of context and in isolation from the rest of Scripture, is eisegesis, jamming our ideas into the Scriptures, rather than exegesis, extracting from the Scriptures their original intent.

But let's be honest: our biggest problems are not with the Scriptures we don't understand and/or with the seeming inconsistencies and/or with our questions and uncertainties, but with what's clear and plain and easy to understand--but impossible to live apart from the grace of God. Can I love my enemy? Ask for God to bless him as he needs to be blessed? Do good to him who does me harm? Pray that God will treat with mercy and grace and love him who mistreats me? Not without God's grace, I can't--and not without my own Spirit-empowered willingness in fact we're not doing all it's our part to do in living out the answers we already have. When it comes to a topic, issue, or problem which the Bible does not specifically address, there are always fundamental biblical principles which can still apply. The question is whether or not we're ready and willing to apply those principles with obedient and trusting hearts. Well, are we?

Save the dates...



...plan ahead!

2018 Girls' Retreat

Friday-Sunday
November 9-11, 2018
St. Basil Academy, Garrison, NY

Theme
Contemporary Moral Issues

Speaker
Natalie Kapeluck-Nixon

2019 Altar Server Retreat

Friday-Sunday
March 1-3, 2019
St. Basil Academy, Garrison, NY

Theme
A Teaching Liturgy

Speaker
Archpriest Jason Vansuch

2019 Lenten Teen Retreat

Friday-Sunday
April 5-7, 2019
Camp Shiloh, Hewitt, NJ

Theme
TBD

Speaker
TBD

Questions? Please reach out to our Chairperson, Danielle Geeza.

Email: nynjocayouth@gmail.com | Phone: 914-222-1317