

**Week of
May 21st
2017**

You can reach Fr. Luke at
frlukacs@gmail.com
or at
(613) 925-3004

Please leave a clear
message and include your
phone number

Next Divine Liturgies

Thursday, May 25th
The Ascension of our Lord
Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am

Sunday, May 28th
Holy Fathers of the First
Ecumenical Council
Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am

Sunday, June 4th
Pentecost
Divine Liturgy at 10:00am

All services at
St. Olympia Chapel
123 Main Street
Potsdam, NY

All welcome!

Congratulations

to SUNY-Potsdam graduate
Kyra Pavelchak.
We wish you God's blessings.

**Sayings from the
Desert Fathers**

More sayings of St. Anthony the
Great (c. 255-356 AD):

A brother renounced the world and gave his goods to the poor, but he kept back a little for his personal expenses. He went to see Abba Anthony. When he told him this, the old man said to him, 'If you want to be a monk, go into the village, buy some meat, cover your naked body with it and come here like that.' The brother did so, and the dogs and birds tore at his flesh. When he came back the old man asked him whether he had followed his advice. He showed him his wounded body, and Saint Anthony said, 'Those who renounce the world but want to keep something for themselves are torn in this way by the demons who make war on them.'

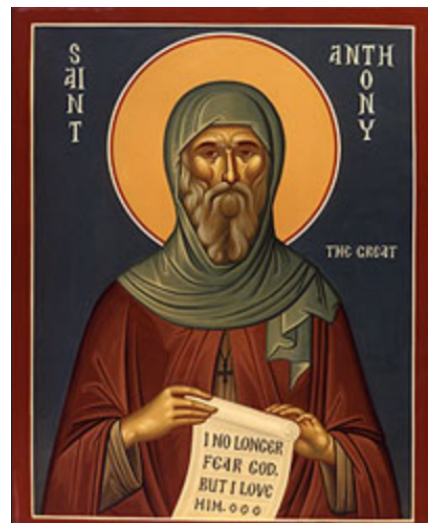
It happened one day that one of the brethren in the monastery of Abba Elias was tempted. Cast out of the monastery, he went over the mountain to Abba Anthony. The brother lived near him for a while and then Anthony sent him back to the monastery from which he had been expelled. When the brothers saw him they cast him out yet again, and he went back to Abba Anthony saying, 'My Father, they will not receive me.' Then the old man sent them a message saying, 'A boat was shipwrecked at sea and lost its cargo; with great difficulty it reached the shore; but you want to throw into the sea that which has found a safe harbor on the shore. 'When the brothers understood that it was Abba Anthony who had sent them this monk, they received him at once.'

Some say of St. Anthony that he was "Spirit-borne," that is, carried along by the Holy Spirit, but he would never speak of this to men. Such men see what is happening in the world, as well as knowing what is going to happen.

Abba Anthony said, "Whoever hammers a lump of iron, first decides what he is going to make of it, a scythe, a sword, or an axe. Even so we ought to make up our minds what kind of virtue we want to forge or we labor in vain."

It was revealed to Abba Anthony in his desert cell that there was one who was his equal in the city. He was a doctor by profession and whatever he had beyond his needs he gave to the poor, and every day he sang the Sanctus with the angels.

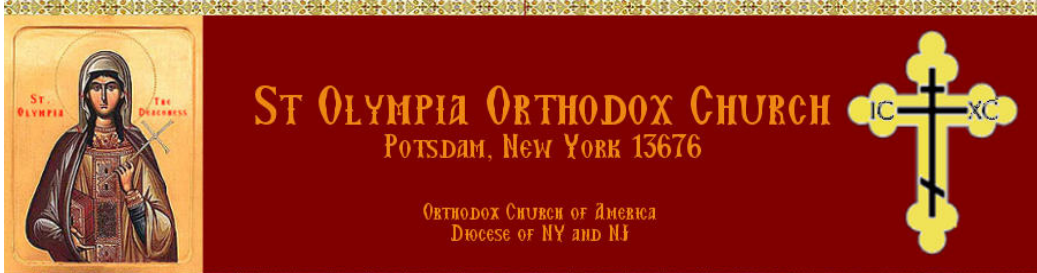
Abba Anthony said, "I no longer fear God, but I love Him. For love casts out fear." (John 4:18)



Planning Ahead

Archbishop Michael's next visit to Potsdam will be:

**Saturday-Sunday,
September 9-10, 2017**



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

Join us for prayer and fellowship. Divine Liturgies are held every Sunday and are primarily in English.

Visit us on Facebook or www.saintolympiaorthodoxchurch.org



A Warm Welcome!

Worshipping with this past Sunday were Fr. Dimitri Choueiry, Khouria Rita and their four children from Montreal. Fr. Dimitri was able to come to Potsdam to serve liturgy at the last minute due to an emergency. Also with us were Dr. Matthew and Megan Prionas with their daughter, Anastasia, from Massena, NY. They are pictured with Parish Council President, Cynthia Eyerler.

Christ is risen!

The Church celebrates the feast of Christ's Ascension this Thursday. On Wednesday, the day before the feast, the Gospel reading from John serves not only as a closure (the service on Wednesday is termed the Leave-taking of Pascha, the end of Christ's time with us on earth in his resurrected body), but as a prelude to the events of the next day and a preparation for the feast to follow, Pentecost. In the pericope, Christ says, "I have come as a light into the world...I did not come to judge the world but to save the world." (John 12:47) The theme of the salvation of the world through the coming of the Holy Spirit is carried forward in both the Apolytikion (hymn) and the icon of the feast:

**O Christ God, You have ascended in Glory,
Granting joy to Your disciples by the promise of the Holy Spirit.
Through the blessing they were assured that You are the Son of God,
The Redeemer of the world!**

**Byzantine icon of the
Ascension of our
Lord Jesus Christ**

**written through the hand of
iconographer
Theophanes the Greek**

**Monastery of Stavronikita
Mount Athos
c. 1535 AD**



Perhaps too often we think that in the context of both the scriptural passage and this hymn, the word "world" means humanity. However, the Orthodox view is far more extensive and all-encompassing. In the 1960s, Fr. Alexander Schmemmann presented some thoughts on this to an ecumenical gathering:

"World" and "sacrament": here we have two great concerns....[T]he Church exists to save the whole world, not merely to satisfy the religious needs of the individual.... On the other hand, and of equal importance, we are experiencing something in the nature of a complete rediscovery of the sacramental nature of Christian life.... This is not merely a renewed insistence upon the importance of particular sacramental acts in the life of the individual...[but] to reassert a sacramental character in the whole of life....What is the relationship between these two concepts, these two realities, world and sacrament? If we gain some new insight into the sacramental nature of Christian life, will that help us to understand the world? If we develop a greater degree of concern for the world, will that deepen our experience and understanding of the sacraments?...In the long history of Christian theology and spirituality, people have spoken of 'the world' in two ways, both of them well rooted in the Gospel. On the one hand, we say that 'God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son'; that the world is an object of divine love, divine creation, divine care; that it is to be saved, transfigured, transformed. But in another sense, and with equal authority in Scriptures and church Tradition, we speak of the world negatively: it is the thing we must leave, a prison from which we must be free, God's rival, deceptively claiming our love with its pride and its lust.... The negative vision is very positive in a spiritual sense; that is to say, it is genuinely necessary to leave the world, to cultivate detachment and freedom from it. But this detachment develops too easily into a kind of indifference, a lack of regard for God's creation.... [W]e must insist again that both views of the matter are rooted in revelation and the experience of the Church. If we chose one of them and pushed it to its logical extreme, ignoring the other, we would end up in heresy: the original Greek sense of that word refers to error based on false choice, to mistaken selectivity.... There can be no Christianity where the world is not seen as an object of divine love. On the other hand there is every justification for that detachment, that abandonment of the world so heavily stressed in the ascetical tradition. To effect a living synthesis between these two principles is, precisely, to define the Christian attitude to the world... we cannot do full justice to both Christian visions of the world unless we come to see the world as sacrament, and ourselves and our whole created environment in sacramental terms. ("The World as Sacrament" in *Church, World and Mission*)

At first glance, the Ascension icon shows Christ being taken up to heaven, but the icon is purposefully ambiguous. In the Epistle reading of the day (Acts 1:1-12), an angel declares, "This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." A footnote to this passage in the Orthodox Study Bible states, "This captures the profound truth that we are already living under His reign while awaiting His return. Thus the icon shows Christ being 'taken up,' and coming again in 'like manner' and also continually present (Mt. 28:20)." Thus the icon also represents Christ as reigning over the Church, over the faithful standing below. Fr. Thomas Hopko commented that as Orthodox we do not believe in either Premillennialism nor Postmillennialism. Rather that in Christ Jesus we share in both "the tribulation and kingdom." (Rev 1:9) He states, "We are in two worlds. Spiritually, mystically, sacramentally, liturgically, baptismally, eucharistically, we are in the Kingdom." In this context we "offer the world back to God in a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving—eucharistically—as in the Orthodox Church's Divine Liturgy." (OSB footnote) Fr. Hopko continues, "But we are [also] still in this history, in the time of Tribulation." (Apocalypse: *The Book of Revelation within Orthodox Christian Tradition*) In this sense, the message of the angel is also a call to the Church. The icon typically shows Christ as relatively small and the Church (the *Laos*), as large. The Church is represented by the Apostles in three-quarter view surrounding the Theotokos (Mother of God) and, for the most part, pointing upwards in astonishment. The Theotokos (lit. "God-bearer"), by contrast, stands forward with hands raised in orans (prayer) position. "Believers are not to stand idly gazing up into heaven, but rather are called to virtuous faith and action in this world until Christ's return." (OSB) She is leading the way, and it is generally understood that her presence is both as image of the whole church and of what a Christian is to be (cf. St. Maximos the Confessor). Also for this reason, many icons show St. Paul among the faithful (Kontoglou, *The Essence of Orthodox Iconography*, in Greek)—a spiritual rather than chronological testimony of Paul's faith-in-action that we, the Church, are to emulate.