

**Week of
June 4th
2017**

You can reach Fr. Luke at
frlukacs@gmail.com

For emergencies, phone
(315) 322-8425

Please leave a clear
message and include your
phone number

Next Services

Saturday, June 10th
Great Vespers at 5:00 pm

Fr. Luke is available to hear
confessions following the service

Sunday, June 11th
All Saints
Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am

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

Sayings from the Desert Fathers

More sayings of Abba Arsenius:

Once at Scetis [a valley region of Egypt where sketes of monastics were common] Abba Arsenius was ill and he was without even a scrap of linen. As he had nothing with which to buy any, he received some through another's charity and he said, "I give You thanks, Lord, for having considered me worthy to receive this charity in Your name.

It was also said of him that on Saturday evenings, preparing for the glory of Sunday, he would turn his back on the sun and stretch out his hands in prayers towards the heavens, till once again the sun shone on his face. Then he would sit down.

Abba David said, "Abba Arsenius told us the following, as though it referred to someone else, but infact it referred to himself. An old man was sitting in his cell and a voice came to him which said, 'Come, and I will show you the works of men,' He got up and followed. The voice led him to a certain place and showed him an Ethiopian cutting wood and making a great pile. He struggled to carry it but in vain. But instead of taking some off, he cut more wood which he added to the pile. He did this for a long time. Going on a little further, the old man was shown a man standing on the shore of a lake drawing up water and pouring it into a broken receptacle, so that the water ran back into the lake. Then the voice said to the old man, 'Come, and I will show you something else.' He saw a temple and two men on horseback, opposite one another, carrying a piece of wood crosswise. They wanted to go in through the door but could not because they held their piece of wood crosswise. Neither of them would draw back before the other, so as to carry the wood straight; so they remained outside the door. The voice said to the old man, 'These men carry the yoke of righteousness with pride, and do not humble themselves so as to correct themselves and walk in the humble way of Christ. So they remain outside the Kingdom of God. The man carrying the wood is he who lives in many sins and instead of repenting he adds more faults to his sins. He who draws the water is he who does good deeds, but mixing bad ones with them, he spoils even his good works. So everyone must be watchful of his actions, lest he labor in vain.'"

Planning Ahead

**Parish Rummage Sale
to benefit our building fund
Saturday, August 26, 2017**

Please keep this in mind as you
do your spring cleaning!

Archbishop Michael's next
visit to Potsdam will be:

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



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. Fr. Luke Majoros is our presbyter.

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

We are pleased to announce
that we will now have Vespers on Saturday evenings at 5:00 pm.
Fr. Luke will be available to hear confessions after the service.

Parish Food Drive

Please bring canned and dry goods to church this Sunday, June 11th, to benefit our local food pantry.

Pastoral Letter

Archbishop Michael's pastoral letter for Pentecost is attached as a .pdf or can be read at http://www.nynjoca.org/files/2017/Archpastoral-Letters/Archpastoral_Letter_Pentecost_2017.pdf

The Feast of All Saints

All major feasts of the Church have a designated period of celebration. The well-known carol, *Twelve Days of Christmas*, shows the number of days in the West for the celebration of Christ's nativity—the same number of days for Eastern Christians. For the Resurrection, we celebrate by singing Paschal hymns at the services (as well as other liturgical practices) for forty days. The period of celebration for Pentecost is eight days and the eighth day is known as the octave of the feast. As was mentioned last week, among other things, Pentecost is often considered the birthday of the Church and the saints are the first fruits of the harvest. The eighth day of Pentecost is dedicated to remembering all these saints.

The word we know as "saint" is *aghios* in Greek, which literally means holy. And all of us are called to be holy. Many saints have become our spiritual heroes to the point that they are famous and have a special day on the calendar, usually on the date of their birth into the Kingdom. However, at least as early as the fourth century, the Church set aside a day to commemorate all the martyrs of the church, whether known by name or action, or whether they are hidden from us.

"Martyr" has developed a more specific connotation in English than the Greek *martyros*, from which the word derives. In Greek, it means witness. There has never been a time in the history of the Church when there has not been persecution and martyrdom. Countless people who witnessed their faith were indeed tortured and executed. However, to be holy and to witness, in other words to become a saint, does not necessarily mean physically losing one's life. The sayings of the Desert Fathers that have been featured in the left column of this newsletter illustrate a different type of witness, martyrdom and of holiness—that of dying to one's self.

For the Orthodox, an icon is, in part, the equivalent of hanging up a poster of your favorite athlete—a reminder of someone who inspires you by the great feats achieved. The icon of All Saints shows many different types of witnesses: prophets, apostles, teachers, preachers, confessors, pastors, monastics. There are men, women, children, married and unmarried, old and young, those who lived long before, during or long after the Incarnation. Their hands are uplifted in prayer and praise. St. Paul says, "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." Specifically, the icon shows the entire Cosmos with the holy ones of God organized by the types given above and arranged in a circle around Christ—a sign of unending communication with the Lord. The saints are without number, cf Rev. 7:9-11, but some are easily identified. The Theotokos and St. John the Baptist flank Christ enthroned. By contrast, Adam and Eve are shown prostrate before the Throne of Preparation (Ps 9:8-9 and various references in Revelation).

The circle of saints is surrounded by light symbolizing the Uncreated Light, and there are trees and plants to symbolize paradise. In each corner is an Old Testament figure. At the top are two Prophet-Kings, David and Solomon. David's scroll reads, "Your friends, O God, became exceedingly honorable to me." (Psalm 138:17 LXX) Solomon's reads, "The righteous live forever, and their reward is with the Lord." (Wis. 5:15) This is taken from one of the Scripture readings of the day. Abraham is enthroned in lower left corner holding a righteous soul (Luke 16:19-31). The penitent thief holds a cross in the center (Luke 23:43) and Jacob, who was granted a vision of heaven, sits at the right (Gen 28:12). It should be no surprise that this icon is also seen as an image of the Second Coming.

The opening lines of the Kontakion (a multi-stanza hymn), sum up the meaning of this icon:

**The world offers You, the Author of all Creation,
the God-bearing martyrs as the first-fruits of nature...**

Truly God has granted the Church great witnesses. May we strive to follow in their footsteps!

