

Next Services

Saturday

November 18th

Great Vespers at 5:00 pm

Sunday

November 19th

Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am

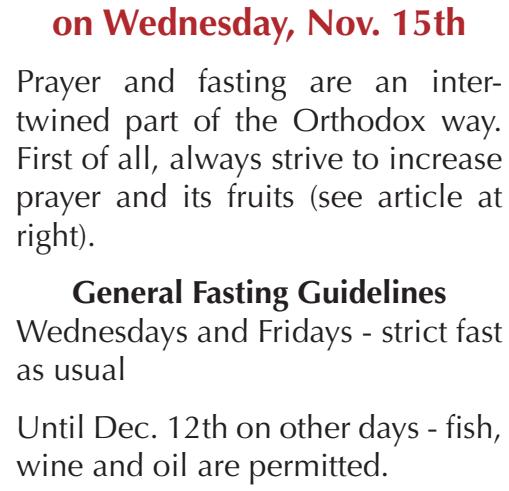
both at

St. Olympia Chapel
123 Main Street
Potsdam, NY

All welcome!

Otego Nuns Wooly Works

Mother Sophronia has posted her monastery's products and we'd like to share them as our holiday season approaches. These items make beautiful gifts and also support the monastery. For more items and information go to <https://www.etsy.com/shop/OtegonunsWoolyWorks>



Advent

The Christmas Fast Begins on Wednesday, Nov. 15th

Prayer and fasting are an intertwined part of the Orthodox way. First of all, always strive to increase prayer and its fruits (see article at right).

General Fasting Guidelines

Wednesdays and Fridays - strict fast as usual

Until Dec. 12th on other days - fish, wine and oil are permitted.

Potsdam Interfaith Thanksgiving Program

Help us help those in need!

Our parish is one of the contributing churches to the Potsdam Interfaith Thanksgiving Program, an annual project that provides boxed-to-go Thanksgiving meals for people who would be without. Our help is needed as listed below.

Wed. Nov 15 – based on donations received, packing lists for different basket sizes written; shopping as necessary for goods not donated in sufficient amounts)

Thu. Nov 16 – at St. Mary's, arrange tables, set out signs and boxes

Fri. Nov 17, evening – at St. Mary's, pack boxes and transport to LDS Church; need for adult supervision of youth volunteers

Sat. Nov 18 – at LDS Church, bag potatoes and apples and add to boxes, arrange tables and boxes in order of Monday pick-up time

Mon. Nov 20 – early am: pick up turkeys, bread, butter/margarine, milk; families pick up finished boxes at LDS Church by appointment time; volunteers (2 drivers per vehicle) deliver boxes to families that don't have transportation; if snow is bad, need volunteers to keep sidewalks clear. Need for people with cars on Monday to do deliveries from LDS church (end of Castle Drive) to people without transportation, 7:30-8:00 am, usually done by lunch time.

Please contact Faye Simmons, Coordinator of the Potsdam Interfaith Thanksgiving Program, at fayesimmons@twcny.rr.com for more information.



Sayings of the Desert Fathers

Abba Moses the Robber (also known as Moses the Ethiopian or Moses the Black) was a former slave who had joined a band of thieves. Later in life he saw the errors of his ways and became a monk, then a priest and eventually one of the revered fathers of Scetis. To read more about him go to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moses_the_Black

A brother at Scetis committed a fault. A council was called to which Abba Moses was invited, but he refused to go to it. Then the priest sent someone to say to him, "Come, for everyone is waiting for you." So he got up and went. He took a leaking jug, filled it with water and carried it with him. The others came out to meet him and said to him, "What is this, Father?" The old man said to them, "My sins run out behind me, and I do not see them, and today I am coming to judge the errors of another." When they heard that they said no more to the brother but forgave him.

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.

Join us for prayer and fellowship.
Divine Liturgies are held every Sunday and are primarily in English.
Fr. Luke Majoros is our presbyter.

Working Our Faith

Note: the following article has been written by an anonymous contributor.

It is included here by permission.

23rd Sunday after Pentecost Epistle (Eph.2:4-10)

If there is one point in Christian faith which seems to create more than a little confusion, it's the relationship between faith and good works, especially with reference to salvation. And clearly, this is a question for and from believers, those who've realized that they need saving from the ultimate consequence of their sin, and who look to Jesus Christ to save them. The unbeliever doesn't care about faith, works, and/or salvation, because they don't believe they need salvation and/or they look for it somewhere other than in Jesus Christ---most often their own good deeds and being a "good person." But the Christian has already realized that this approach is a dead end. Simply as human beings, we know we're not made and meant for total passivity and inactivity. So how do faith and works fit together?

Well, in this past Sunday's Epistle, Ephesians 2:4-10, we hear yet again St. Paul's insistence that "by grace [the undeserved, unearnable, unrepayable love of God in action on our behalf] you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." On our part, that's the "how" of our salvation: faith; trusting Christ and what He has accomplished on our behalf in His Cross and Resurrection, and just hanging on for dear life. And the "what we're saved from," St. Paul mentions earlier in the chapter. He says that apart from Christ we're "dead in trespasses and sins," living---not in tune with the true and living God---but in tune with and in service to "the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience." As such, "we all once conducted ourselves in the desires of the flesh [of our fallen nature], fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind." As a result, we were "by nature children of wrath," people deserving only God's condemnation and punishment. "But God, Who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ...and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Spiritually, we were dead and doomed. In our baptismal union with Christ God has raised us to life again and, in Christ, has already brought us up to heaven and endowed us with His Kingdom which is to come. That's the "what."

But other than life in the eternal kingdom, is there anything we're saved for in this life? Yup: you and I have been saved for the purpose of good works. Listen again to verse 10: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." That word "for" ties what follows to what has gone immediately before: because we are saved by grace through faith, therefore we are "created in Christ Jesus for good works." And of course that doesn't start just with St. Paul. In Matthew 5:16 the Lord Jesus tells us plainly to "let [our] light so shine before men, that they may see [our] good works and glorify [our] Father in heaven." And in James 2:18 the Apostle says, "But someone will say, 'You have faith and I have works.' Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works." You see, "faith" is both trusting in Christ for our salvation and trusting Christ enough to do what He says: to love our enemies, pray for those who mistreat us, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, house the homeless, visit the sick and imprisoned, and so on. Our good works are the evidence, the proof, and the living out of our faith; the evidence and the lived expression of trusting Christ enough to do what He says.

Now, many will say, "Yeah; all of that makes sense. God takes the initiative to work in us to save us and re-create us, and the good works are the outflow, the result, the fruit of God's work in us." But notice how St. Paul says that God has prepared these good works beforehand; that from all eternity God looked at each one of us and said "This is where you fit into My overall plan to heal and restore all of creation in Christ; and these works are your cooperation with My work." In 1 Corinthians 3:9 St. Paul says in Christ you and I are "God's fellow workers;" that in and through our doing the works God has prepared for each of us, we have the dignity and privilege of working side-by-side with the Lord God Almighty in His work of establishing the new creation!

But notice how he also says that God prepared these good works beforehand "that we should walk in them." Back in verse 2 he says that apart from Christ we "once walked [lived our life] according to the course of this world;" but now because of and in our relationship with Christ, we "walk" in good works; we're to make good works our purpose in and our way of life. And what he's talking about is how we live day by day, what our way of life is. He's not saying that, like a Boy Scout, we do one good deed per day, and we're done; but that doing good works are our continual way of life.

Not that it comes as a surprise to God if/when we do otherwise; when we sin; when we get lazy; when we get selfish and self-centered and care more about me than anything or anyone else. Jesus needs to save us and forgive us precisely because we cannot in our own strength achieve moral perfection. But understand that the verb "walk" really pertains to the orientation of one's life. It answers the question "What is my life really all about? Just what are my core values, my goals, my fundamental reason for being? Many people today "walk" in the stream of popular North American culture of People magazine, American Idol, The Voice, Disney, of sports, and a general cultural mentality that shamelessly promotes the elevation of the self above all else. To reduce the idea of "walk" just to the steps one takes and the choices one makes, is to misunderstand the profound claims Paul makes here. We're not just saved from our bad individual choices or what we used to follow. God delivers us from an entire mode of existence, and as Colossians 1:13 explains, "has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed [transferred] us into the kingdom of the Son of His love;" He transfers us from one whole way of being to another.

Clear as mud? Think of it this way. Consider the house or apartment in which we each live and make our dwelling. We set up our place according to everyday living habits, preferences, and things we take for granted. And the set up reinforces these everyday habits. We put the toothpaste in a certain drawer; we place pots and pans in certain places because of how and why we use them. I put my favorite chair here so that I can see the TV there. This is more than just a convenient set-up of the house. It's an entire environment that makes for certain ways of going about the details. But whose house am I living in, and who set it up? Back in verse 2, where Paul says that we "once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience," we were living in a house neither we nor God set up and operated; we were living in a house set up and operated by the enemy of our souls. And our individual actions, behaviors, and generally how we lived, were products of that environment, under the operations of its ruler. When we operated according to the transgressions and sins---the mode of life in the old house---we were "dead in trespasses and sins." In contrast, says Paul, God "made us alive together with Christ" and "created us in Christ Jesus." Our transfer is a genuinely new thing; we are created new. We don't just feel better about our relationship with God while still living in the old house; we have a whole new relationship with God in a brand-new house. We have a whole new environment, which by God's grace active within us is intended to engender a whole new way of living: a life which is not always and only about me, but a life which includes you and your needs and your feelings and your hurts and your hopes and your dreams, about all of which I now care enough in love to try to help. Good works are not special things that we do only on special occasions; they're the natural out-flowing, if you will the natural by-product, of knowing, love, and trusting Jesus Christ.

As Paul goes on in Ephesians, he'll stress the importance of reconciliation: not just our reconciliation with God, but also with each other. This new house under the Lordship of Jesus has no place for divided humanity. The "other" is no longer the "other" but sister/brother. We are saved and remade in Christ for this, for the "good works" that are both part of our new life in the new house under the benevolent and gracious house Lord and living proof of our reconciliation with God that serves as an invitation to others to be reconciled with God. 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 says that God "has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation...Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God." Our works are also part of our witness. How clear and attracting are your and my witness today?

* * *