

**Week of
March 5th
2017**

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(613) 925-3004

Please leave a clear
message and include your
phone number

Next Divine Liturgy

**March 12th
Sunday of Orthodoxy**

*This is Mother Sophronia's last
Sunday with us before she moves
to Holy Myrrhbearers Monastery
in Otego, NY.*

**123 Main Street
Potsdam, NY
10:00 am**

**Lenten Lunch
and fellowship
to follow**



Mother Sophronia presented the icon of St. Olympia to our parish on Sunday of Orthodoxy. We are grateful to receive this patronal icon so lovingly and beautifully written through her hand. It is a stunning portrayal of a seldom-depicted saint. Shown with Mother Sophronia are her daughter, June, and grandson, Hunter.



***Lenten Prayer
of St. Ephraim the Syrian***

***O Lord
and Master of my life,
take from me
the spirit of slothfulness,
faint-heartedness,
lust for power
and idle talk.***

***But give rather the spirit of
chastity,
humility,
patience
and love
to your servant.***

***Yea, O Lord and King,
grant me to see my own errors
and not to judge my brother,
for Thou art blessed
unto ages of ages.***

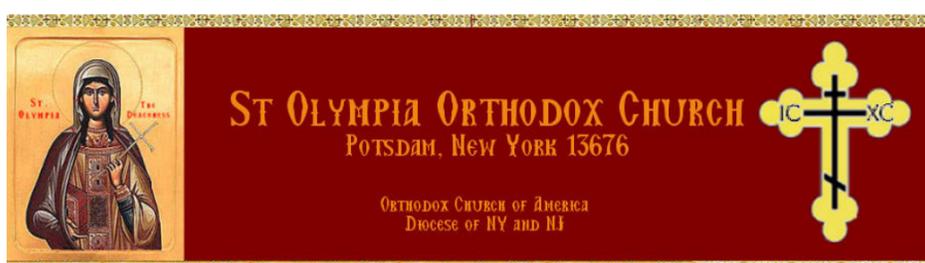
Amen.

Save the Dates

Archbishop Michael's next visits to
Potsdam will be:

Wednesday, March 22, 2017
Presanctified Liturgy

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

The Uncreated Light

The first two Sundays in Great Lent both celebrate the triumph of Orthodoxy. This past Sunday focused on the restoration of the holy icons to the church during the Synod of Constantinople on March 11th, 843. The Synod affirmed what the Seventh Ecumenical Council had declared in 787, namely that the second person of the Holy Trinity became incarnate and thus Jesus Christ, one person with both the nature of God and human nature may be, and ought to be depicted in images. The veneration of these images of Christ passes to Him who is depicted. And since the image of Jesus Christ is found in His Holy Mother (above all) and in the saints who "put on Christ" their images may be venerated as well.

This coming Sunday (of St. Gregory Palamas) celebrates the 14th century triumph of the tradition of Orthodox spiritual life given by Christ in the face of the Renaissance spirit of intellectual autonomy. St. Gregory Palamas wrote treatises that systematically defended the transcendent, unapproachable God as immanent and active in His creation through His uncreated energies, the uncreated light. We are presented with this "Taboric light" in the Gospel descriptions of Christ's transfiguration before Peter, James and John. Through the centuries, many holy people have experienced this light. In more recent years, we have the testimony of Motivilov, the disciple of St. Seraphim of Sarov, which he put in writing where he describes a conversation between himself and the saint where both of them were engulfed by this uncreated light. And Elder Auxentios (1892-1981) of Attica, a monk who confessed to newly-glorified Saint Paisios, experienced this light in his practice of the Jesus prayer. Once the elder attended the Divine Liturgy and when coming forward to receive communion his face shone with such light that, in the words of the priest liturgist "I became dizzy and almost fell down".

But, just as the apostles were only given the vision of glory "as much as they could bear it" so it will be with ourselves. Our fasting, almsgiving and increased prayer during Lent is to increase our capacity to experience Christ in that light or to restore us if we have wandered off and become blind. These Sunday celebrations are a time to rejoice in seeing the true light that we truly receive in the Divine Liturgy and the communion of the Holy Mysteries. And mid-week at the Presanctified Liturgy, we are reminded by the priest standing before us with a lighted candle who exclaims, "The light of Christ illumines all."

--Mother Sophronia



Lenten Reading

During Lent, our daily Scripture readings are taken from Isaiah, Genesis, Proverbs. Here are two reflections on Genesis 1:26, both taken from *The Bible and the Holy Fathers*.

The phrase "in the image" implies a gift within man but at the same time a goal set before him, a possession but also a destiny, since it really does constitute man's being, but only in potentiality.... Having been made in the image of God, man has a theological structure. And to be a true man he denies himself and destroys himself. When he lives theocentrically he realizes himself by reaching out into infinity; he attains his true fulfillment by extending into eternity.... By making himself his own goal and objective, man "became his own idol" [according to St. Andrew of Crete]. Of his own free will he broke off his iconic relationship with God and impeded his movement towards Him. He made himself autonomous, limited himself to created time and space, to his created nature, with the physiological result that a spiritual famine broke out within him.

--Panayiotis Nellas, *Deification in Christ*

Our likeness to God requires our cooperation. When the intellect begins to perceive the Holy Spirit with full consciousness, we should realize that grace is beginning to paint the divine likeness over the divine image in us. If the intellect does not receive the perfection of the divine likeness through such illumination, although it may have almost every other virtue, it will still have no share in the perfect love.

--St. Diadochos of Photiki, *On Spiritual Knowledge, Philokalia*