

## Next Services

**Saturday  
September 30th**

**Great Vespers at 5:00 pm**

**Sunday  
October 1st**

**Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am**

both at

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

**All welcome!**

## Project Mexico

**St. Innocent Day Sunday Offering Fundraiser**

Support Project Mexico On Oct. 8th, 2017!

To celebrate Saint Innocent's blessed feast day, we humbly ask for your support by passing an offering tray at your parish on October 8th, 2017!

There are two ways to get involved:

- Organize an Offering Tray at your Parish (details below)
- Donate (\$2k below)

Thank you for your continued support, participating in this nationwide collection will provide essential services and care for our beautiful, growing flock!

**It's Simple!**

**Step 1:** Ask your parish priest and sign up! Sign up to participate in this fundraiser in any way you wish. Email: [mail@projectmexico.org](mailto:mail@projectmexico.org)

**Step 2:** Receive the offering tray from Project Mexico! Project Mexico will send you an offering tray, decorated by the sign of St. Innocent Orthodoxy.

**Step 3:** Pass the tray and send the offering! Pass the tray on October 8th and return the offering to Project Mexico!

**Donate Today!**

**Links in this bulletin are not live. For information, details, and registration on Project Mexico go to [www.projectmexico.org](http://www.projectmexico.org)**



The OCA Diocese of NY/NJ's newest mission parish community, Saint Simon of Cyrene in New Brunswick, NY, will host an Akathist service, **To the African Saints**, with prayers for racial reconciliation on Sunday, October 1st at 6:00 pm. Following the service, which will include pastors and members of faith communities in the area, Archbishop Michael will offer a brief address on the themes of racism, prejudice, and reconciliation. The faithful of the diocese are encouraged to attend. Details and an invitation from Archbishop Michael may be found at: [https://nynjoca.org/files/2017/New-Brunswick-NJ/Announcement\\_Akathist\\_African\\_Martyrs2017.pdf](https://nynjoca.org/files/2017/New-Brunswick-NJ/Announcement_Akathist_African_Martyrs2017.pdf) (note: this link is not live).

## Sayings from the Desert Fathers

A woman had an illness they call cancer of the breast; she had heard of Abba Longinus and wanted to meet him. Now he lived at the ninth milestone from Alexandria. As the woman was looking for him, the blessed man happened to be collecting wood beside the sea. When she met him, she said to him, "Abba, where does Abba Longinus, the servant of God live?" not knowing that it was he. He said, "Why are you looking for that old impostor? Do not go to see him, for he is a deceiver. What is the matter with you?" The woman showed him where she was suffering. He made the sign of the cross over the sore and sent her away saying, "Go and God will heal you, for Longinus cannot help you at all." The woman went away confident in this saying, and she was healed on the spot. Later, telling others what had happened and mentioning the distinctive marks of the old man, she learned that it was Abba Longinus himself.

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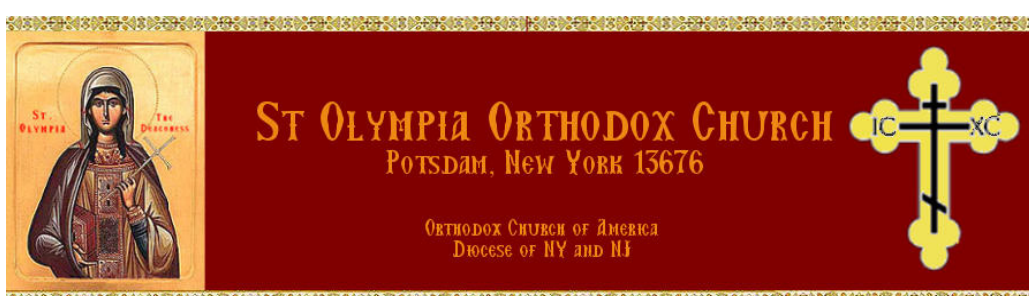
Another time, they brought to Abba Longinus someone who was possessed by a demon. He said to those who were escorting him, "I can do nothing for you; but go instead to Abba Zeno." So Abba Zeno began to put pressure onto the demon to cast it out. The demon began to cry out, "Perhaps, Abba Zeno, you think I am going away because of you; look, down there Abba Longinus is praying, and challenging me and it is for fear of his prayers that I go away, for to you, I would not even have given an answer.

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Abba Longinus said to Abba Acacius, "A woman knows she has conceived when she no longer loses any blood. So it is with the soul, she knows she has conceived the Holy Spirit when the passions stop coming out of her. But as long as one is held back in the passions, ow can one dare to believe one is sinless? Give blood and receive the Spirit."

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**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.**

**Visit us on Facebook or [www.saintolympiaorthodoxchurch.org](http://www.saintolympiaorthodoxchurch.org)**

## Lost and Found

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

Have you ever lost anything? How did it make you feel: angry, frustrated, confused? Did it make you afraid? After all, forgetting can be a sign of Alzheimer's or other diseases. So if I can't find my keys, is it thoughtlessness or the beginning of the end? We've all been there; lost things are a fact of life. For little kids, it's things like lost toys, lost arguments on the playground or lost friends, at least until they make up five minutes later. For adults it often goes a little deeper: not only lost glasses, but lost kids at the store, lost tempers, lost relationships that can never be recovered or repaired, or perhaps lost minds over the craziness of it all! We all lose things. Some are found, but others are gone forever!

And as we look at this morning's Epistle, 2 Corinthians 6:1-10, let's focus on that phrase "gone forever," because it describes something that never comes back! What never comes back to us (other than the waistline we had at 20)? The answer will be as varied as the individual. Words that probably come to mind are "yesterday," or "today," "opportunity," and "time." Those are good answers, but there's one word which encompasses them all: the word "now!" That's the word by which kingdoms have been built and conquered, destinies have been achieved, fortunes have been won and lost, and most importantly eternal life has been received or rejected.

It's that last which makes St. Paul begin this chapter: with a plea to the Corinthians and to us "not to receive the grace of God in vain; don't throw away God's grace!" What's he getting at? In the first half of verse 2 he quotes Isaiah 49:8, "In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you." Originally, that was God's promise to Israel that the coming Messiah would restore the nation. To that Messiah God says "I will preserve You and give You as a covenant to the people, to restore the earth... that You may say to the prisoners, 'Go forth,' to those in darkness, 'Show yourselves.'" That promise had been made some 500 years in the past. And to many it seemed nothing more than empty words, like "pie in the sky when you die by and by." But because Jesus has come and suffered and died and rose again, in the second half of verse 2 the Apostle can shout with joy, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of the salvation." We don't have to wait any longer. As he had already said in 2 Corinthians 1:20, "all the promises of God in [Jesus] are Yes, and in Him, Amen [So be it]!" But to each of us, for whom this "now" will soon be in the unrecoverable past, the message is clear: "Use it, and wisely, or lose it."

The sad fact of the matter is that the Bible is full of people who neglected the "now," and in the process lost that which they could never get back. Consider, for example, Esau and the lost birthright, because while the impact and importance of the "now" is seen in many accounts in Scripture, few show it so clearly as in the life of the elder brother named Esau. In Genesis 25, we meet Abraham's two grandsons, Esau and Jacob. Esau was the elder brother; as such he was entitled to two-thirds of his father Isaac's estate and his father's special blessing. But in verses 29-34 we see that "Jacob had cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. And Esau said to Jacob, 'Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary.' (Therefore his name was called Edom [red]). But Jacob said, 'Sell me your birthright as of this day.' And Esau said, 'Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?' Then Jacob said, 'Swear to me as of this day.' So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright." You see? "Now" is the one precious and valuable portion of time that belongs to us, because it's the only portion of time about which we can be sure and in which we know we can act. Esau acted in his "now" but he made the wrong choice, because he held the wrong priorities. He put filling his belly now ahead of preserving his birthright for later; and he did so, not from ignorance, negligence or some careless action, but from willful, deliberate action. Genesis 27:34 tells us that when Esau finally realized how stupid he'd been, "he cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry;" but his tears were useless, because it was forever too late. Esau eventually regained his respectability, and rebuilt his relationship with Jacob; but he never got back the "now" that he threw away for a single meal. It was gone forever.

Then, too, we have the example of the disciples and the lost hour. That the importance of "now" plays a huge part, not only in our relationship with God, but also in our relationship with and our ministry to others, is clearly seen in an experience Jesus had in the saddest, darkest, and most critical hours of His life. After the Last Supper, knowing full well what was coming, Jesus went to pray in peace and quiet of the Garden of Gethsemane, taking with Him Peter, James, and John. Matthew 26:36 tells us that "Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, 'Sit here while I go and pray over there.'" Jesus didn't say "Protect Me" or "Make Me feel better" or even "Tell Me what I should do." He said, "Just be near; just be there with Me." Nothing courageous or heroic or even slightly energetic; just be there. Yet He came back, not once, not twice, but three times, and each time found them sleeping. In verses 40-41 Jesus says "to Peter, 'What? Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.'" Yes, Peter, James and John would all serve as strong witnesses for Jesus; and two of them would seal their witness with martyr's blood. But there was one thing they would never ever get the chance to do over again: to stay awake with Jesus just that one hour. They missed their "now;" they missed their opportunity to minister to the One Who ministered to them just by being there as Jesus had asked. Their spiritual failure came not from willful action, but from negligence, carelessness, the frailty of their flesh. But still, they failed. And I, for one, cannot wonder if that failure didn't haunt them till the day they died.

Well yeah, but that was the Apostles. Am I supposed to believe that such "now" moments show up in my life too? Yup. Have you ever had an experience which was just so out of the ordinary that it was obvious that God was in it? I've had those "divine appointments," like making a hospital visit I didn't feel like making, only to have the person I was visiting make a huge spiritual break-through because, through prayer, God was there. Another "divine appointment" in my life was not God meeting with me, but God moving a bunch of little boys to do something which ended up saving my life. A divine appointment is a meeting, encounter, or event that didn't schedule, but that God undoubtedly did. For His purposes and for our benefit God often brings people together at a specific time for a very specific reason, even if we don't realize it at the time. In Acts 8:26-40, for example, "an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip [one of the seven deacons], saying, 'Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' This is desert." Did he feel like putting his feet up that day? Maybe. Did he fancy a stroll in the blazing desert sun? Probably not. But this was his "now," and he went for it. And thank God he did, because on that desert road he met "a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury." This man was a God-fearer, a Gentile who believed in the one true God but had not converted to Judaism. Long story short: the Ethiopian was converted to Christ, was baptized right on the spot, and went home to plant in Ethiopia seeds of the Christian Faith which have blossomed ever since. Though he didn't realize it then and maybe never did, Philip's "now" was actually the first step in leading an entire nation to Christ.

Some people get freaked out by the idea of divine appointments, fearing that they'll "mess it up." But God isn't so much interested in our ability as in our availability. He can make us able; only we can make ourselves available to Him. So, then, are you and I willing to be used by God to advance His Kingdom or to help another brother or sister? If we're willing to be used, God can and will use us. The response and result may not always be what we're looking for. In Acts 26:28 we see that in preaching to King Agrippa II, even St. Paul couldn't lead that stubborn horse to the waters of baptism. Seizing the moment, seizing the "now," may not always lead to what we'd call "success." But are we willing to try?

Some of the choices we make in the here and now have very little impact; others echo through eternity. But that's for God to evaluate, not us. Neither is it our job to be depressed by however many "nows" we've lost. God's forgiveness and providential care cover those. The fact with which we must deal is that there are still "nows" that have not been lost and are just waiting for us to seize those opportunities to work with God in changing our corner of the world for the better. Will we? Or will we throw away one "now" after another, until there's no more "now" for us?