



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

Our priest is Fr. Peter Irfan, Acting Rector.
You may reach him at 716-342-8520 (cell) or at fatherpeter777@yahoo.com.

Please join us for prayer and fellowship.
Divine Liturgies are held every Sunday at 10 am.
Great Vespers are held every Saturday evening at 5 pm.

Next Services

Saturday, February 16th

Great Vespers
5:00 pm

Fr. Peter is available to hear confessions before Vespers by appointment.

Sunday, February 17th

Matins
8:45 am

Divine Liturgy
10:00 am

Fellowship to follow at

St. Olympia Chapel
123 Main Street
Potsdam, NY, 13676

Exploring Christian Faith

St. Olympia Orthodox Church is hosting a series of events on selected Saturdays at 6 pm (following Vespers at 5 pm). Our next feature:

The Island (Остров)

Saturday, February 16th at 6 pm
(Following Vespers at 5 pm)

At St. Olympia Chapel

Join us for pizza, popcorn and an amazing movie!

"The Island asks the favorite Russian question: Who is guilty? And to that, it adds another: How can we be redeemed?"

--Washington Post



Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seems to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He takes the wise in their own craftiness. (1 Corinthians 3:18-19)

Official selection of the Sundance, Venice, London, Seattle and Toronto Film Festivals.



Somewhere in Northern Russia, in a small Russian Orthodox monastery, lives a very unusual man. His fellow monks are confused by his bizarre conduct. Those who visit the island believe that the man has the power to heal, exorcise demons and foretell the future. However, he considers himself unworthy because of a sin he committed in his youth. A parable about faith and salvation, *The Island* combines the realities of everyday Russia with monastic life and routine.

Psalm 9:1-3

Note: the following article was written by the editor of this newsletter. Its publication does NOT have the permission of our usual anonymous contributor and I ask his forgiveness for this.

**I will give thanks to You, O Lord, with my whole heart;
I will tell of all Your wondrous things;
I will be glad and rejoice in You;
I will sing praise to Your name,, O Most High.**

This is not a commentary in the normal sense and I would fail miserably if I tried to write it in the talkative, pointed and often humorous style of our anonymous contributor. Rather, it is an expression of gratitude to our Lord for allowing this person to give so much to our little parish. I have known his name from the beginning of this wonderful relationship that our readers have had with him. I now choose to share it with you: He is Fr. Philip Speranza, a hieromonk (monastic priest) who fell asleep in the Lord unexpectedly (at least to us) five days ago at the age of 72. I'd like to tell you a little about him.

Fr. Philip was born in Chicago and attended a Roman Catholic seminary but never entered the Catholic priesthood. Rather, he encountered Orthodoxy and was ordained by Archbishop Kryill (Yonchev) of the Bulgarian diocese, first as a deacon and then to the Holy Priesthood in 1973. He served in Toronto and then in Calgary. He also worked a secular job for quite some time--I can only imagine that this helped to give him that down-to-earth, pithy tone to his writings. He was blessed to enter the OCA Archdiocese of Canada in 1992, first serving a mission parish in Calgary and then a group of rural parishes northeast of Edmonton. A few years later, he was transferred back to Calgary. In 2000, he was tonsured a monk and was elevated to Igumen four years later. He served as Rector of Holy Trinity Church in Edmonton beginning in 2005. He was released from his attachment at the Monastic Community of Saint Silouan in Johnstown, Ontario and was installed as Abbot of the Hermitage of the Protection in Edmonton, Alberta--he also continued to shepherd his flock. In 2012, the Holy Synod elevated Igumen Philip to the dignity of archimandrite. Just a few months ago, he was relocated to Toronto where he was attached to the Church of Christ the Savior.

The above description almost feels like a statistical rendering of his life. It seems obvious that he loved to write and was very much at home speaking the Truth. When I first asked his permission to reprint the sermons that were sent out under the pen name (or at least e-mail moniker) of "Fr. Guido," I told him this was because I enjoyed his friendly, conversational style that was beautifully balanced with a voice of authority and always backed by Scripture. His authority when speaking Truth was accompanied by humility, and the realization that what and how he spoke was not always well received. As a "coda" to an attribution of an internet posting, he described himself as "a misanthropic old misery in the Archdiocese of Canada." Fr. Philip gave me the go-ahead to include his writings in this way: "You may reprint them, if you like; but you are never to attribute them to me." I have some wonderful Lenten writings that have not yet been shared. I ask Fr. Philip's prayers for our small flock as I begin to send these out in his name and His name in the coming weeks. To misappropriate his favorite closing line, it is no longer his choice, but mine!

P.S. For those of you who would like to hear him speak, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfKMWmVVVbo>



The funeral for Fr. Philip Speranza will take place at Christ the Saviour Cathedral in Toronto.

The Panihida (memorial service) is at 7 pm on Tuesday, February 12th.

There will be a Hierarchical Liturgy on Wednesday, February 13th at 8:30 am followed by the funeral service at 10 am.

Interment will be at the Russian Orthodox cemetery in Rawden, Quebec.

Memory eternal!

PROJECT MEXICO!

Want to spend your Spring Break making a difference?

Work alongside other Orthodox Christians in the service of our ministry south of the border. Get to know the boys who are growing up at the orphanage through soccer games, worship and evening activities.

Engage in discussions about faith and service both in your local community and abroad.

- For a multi-day package Home Building trip, groups can register through our official partners, **Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF)**.
- Individual and group trips available.

Dates: March 1 through April 15

Register Today

Project Mexico
& St. Innocent Orphanage



Build Love This Spring