



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

*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.

Upcoming Services:
Saturday, February 22
Great Vespers: 5pm

Sunday, February 23
Matins: 8:45 am
Divine Liturgy: 10am

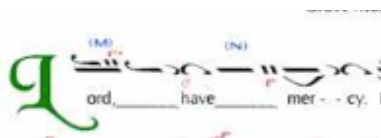
**Lunch and fellowship
will follow the service**

*The above services are
at St. Olympia Chapel
123 Main Street
Potsdam, NY, 13676*

*Daily Vespers at the
Hermitage of Saint
Olympia*
<saintolympiahermitage.org>

**5 PM - Monday
through Saturday**

Byzantine Chant Class Resumes
4 PM, Saturday, February 22
Come and sing!



Sunday of the Last Judgment



Icon by Fr. Luke Dingman.

Editor's Note: I was introduced to this at Holy Apostles Orthodox Church in Columbia, SC where I attended before moving back to the North Country.

*When You, O God, shall come to earth with glory, / all things
shall tremble / and the river of fire shall flow before Your
judgment seat; / the books shall be opened and the hidden
things disclosed! / Then deliver me from the unquenchable
fire, / and make me worthy to stand at Your right hand,
righteous Judge!*

Troparion for Sunday of the Last Judgment

*For a good defense before the dread Judgment Seat of Christ,
let us pray to the Lord: Lord have mercy.*

Prayer from the Divine Liturgy

What Kind of Fire?

by Matushka Valerie Zahirsky

The image of fire appears frequently in the Orthodox Church's prayers and teachings concerning our eternal destiny as human beings. For example, on the Sunday of the Last Judgment (Meatfare Sunday) we sang in the kontakion, "When You, O God, shall come to earth with glory, all things shall tremble, and the river of fire shall flow before Your judgment seat."

For some people, this image terrifyingly conjures up flaming torment in which sinners will be forced to exist forever. On the other hand, Ron Reagan, the adopted son of President Reagan, considers it something to scoff at. In a short TV ad promoting an atheist/agnostic organization, he identifies himself as "Ron Reagan, lifelong atheist, not afraid of burning in hell."

With such divergent views in the world around us, it's important to understand what the "river of fire" is in Orthodox teaching. In one well-known description, Alexandre Kalomiros writes that in the New Creation of the Resurrection, "Love will enrobe everything with its sacred Fire which will flow like a river from the throne of God and will irrigate paradise. But this same river of Love—for those who have hate in their hearts—will suffocate and burn."

Who can determine what will be in our hearts when we meet the Lord in the final judgment? Only we ourselves. We all will encounter the same river, and for those who have nurtured love in their hearts it will be a refreshing stream that "irrigates paradise." Only those who have allowed hate to overtake their hearts will "suffocate and burn" in that same river.

We can't help but marvel at this difference. It surely is marvelous that the same "river of fire" flowing from God's throne can be experienced as paradise by some and as suffocation and burning by others. But the even greater wonder is the generosity of God. He has no desire to see us suffocate and burn in that river. He leaves it up to us to fashion our hearts, and to determine what our experience of the river will be. If we undertake the lifelong struggle to make ourselves worthy, we can enjoy the destiny described in the kontakion's final line. We can, for all eternity, "stand at Your right hand, O Righteous Judge."

From the OCA Website

Facebook Name Change!

Please note that we will be changing the name of our Facebook page from

Orthodox Christian Mission for Potsdam
to

St Olympia Orthodox Church

This change will take place on **March 1, 2020**.

We want to let you know well in advance. We are not sure how the name change will impact our loyal followers. The link to Facebook on the website will be also be updated on March 1.

