

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

*Fr. Nikolay Khalimonov, Priest-in-Charge, 323-851-7989, nkhalimonov@yahoo.com
 Fr. Alexy Karlgut, Dean/Administrator, 607-759-1833*

Please join us for prayer and fellowship.

Upcoming Services:
 Saturday, Apr 29, May 6
 Great Vespers: 5pm

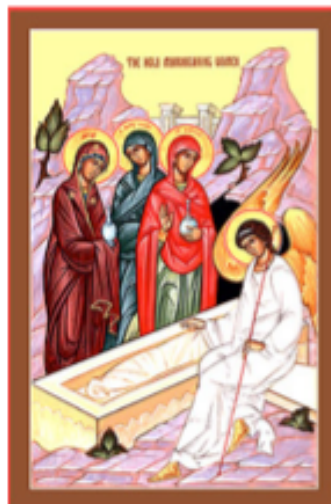
**Sunday of the Holy Myrrhbearing Women
 with the Noble Joseph
 April 30**

Sunday, Apr 30, May 7
 Divine Liturgy: 10am

Coffee and fellowship will
 follow the service

*The above services are at
 St. Olympia Church
 34 North Main Street
 Norwood, NY, 13668*

*Mailing Address
 St. Olympia Orthodox
 Church PO Box 122
 Canton, NY13617*



**Sunday of the Paralytic
 May 7**

*By Your divine intercession, O Lord,
 as You raised up the paralytic of old,
 so raise up my soul, paralyzed by sins and thoughtless acts;
 so that being saved I may sing to You:
 "Glory to Your power, O compassionate Christ!"*

Kontakion of the Sunday of the Paralytic

Sunday of the Paralytic

May 7

Many miracles in the Old Testament involve water. To name but a few, the water of the Nile turned to blood after Moses lifted his rod and struck the water before Pharaoh and His servants (Exodus 7:20). Not only was the Nile turned to blood, but also "their rivers, their canals, their ponds, and all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and there shall be blood throughout the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone" (Exodus 7:19).

In chapter 14 of Exodus, Moses divided the waters of the Red Sea, and the Hebrews passed over as if on dry land. When they were safely across, the waters came together, and their Egyptian pursuers were drowned.

On their forty year journey to the Promised Land, the Hebrews camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for them to drink. The people murmured against Moses, asking him why he had led them out of Egypt. God told Moses to strike the rock at Horeb. Then water came out of it so that everyone could drink (Exodus 17:6).

In Judges 6:36-40 we read about Gideon and the dew on the fleece. When Gideon squeezed the fleece, there was enough to fill a bowl with water.

On the Fourth Sunday of Pascha, the Church remembers the man who lay paralyzed at the Sheep Pool in Jerusalem for thirty-eight years, waiting for someone to put him into the pool. The first person to enter the pool after an Angel troubled the water would be healed of his infirmities, but someone always entered the pool before him. Seeing the man, the Lord felt compassion for him and healed him.

The Lord healed the paralytic during the days of the Passover, when He had gone to Jerusalem for the Feast, and He remained there teaching and working miracles. According to Saint John the Theologian, this miracle took place on the Sabbath.

Like some Old Testament miracles, many of Christ's miracles also involved water, and they prefigure the Church's Baptism, which cleanses us of every sin. In the Sheep Pool, once a year, only one person was healed, but Christ saves endless multitudes by divine Baptism. Sometimes, as in the case of Saint Vladimir (July 15), Baptism can also heal our bodily infirmities.

In the Canon for the Paralytic, the Angel who stirred the water in the Sheep Pool is identified as the Archangel Michael. Some of the Troparia call him "Leader of the Angels," and "Supreme Commander" (Ode 1). In Ode 3 we ask him to "protect us from falling into the passions of life." In Ode 6, we ask Saint Michael to guide us on the paths of life." In Ode 8, we ask him to pray with all the Bodiless Hosts, that we may be granted deliverance from our offenses, correction of our life, and the enjoyment of eternal blessings.

As we remember the paralytic, let us ask Christ to "raise up our souls, paralyzed by sins and thoughtless acts" (Kontakion of the paralytic).

Great Martyr Irene

May 5

The holy Great Martyr Irene was born in the city of Magedon in Persia during the fourth century. She was the daughter of Licinius, the pagan ruler of a certain small kingdom, and his wife Licinia, and at birth her parents named her Penelope.

Penelope was very beautiful, and her father kept her isolated in a high tower from the time she was six so that she would not be exposed to Christianity. He also placed thirteen young maidens in the tower with her. An old tutor by the name of Apellian was appointed to give her the best possible education. Apellian was a Christian, and during her lessons, he told the girl about Christ the Savior and taught her about the Christian Faith and Christian virtues.

When Penelope reached adolescence, her parents began to think about her marriage. One night Penelope beheld the following vision: a dove entered the tower with an olive branch in its beak, depositing it on the table. An eagle also flew in carrying a wreath of flowers, and left it on the table. Then a raven flew in through another window and dropped a snake on the table. In the morning Penelope woke up and wondered about the meaning of the things she had seen. She related them to her tutor Apellian and he explained that the dove symbolized her superior education, and that the olive branch represented the grace of God which is received in Baptism. The eagle and the olive branch indicated success in her future life. The snake signified that she would experience suffering and sorrow.

At the end of the conversation Apellian said that the Lord wished to betroth her to Himself and that Penelope would undergo much suffering for her heavenly Bridegroom. After this Penelope refused marriage, was baptized by the priest Timothy, and he named her Irene (peace). She even urged her own parents to become Christians. Shortly after being baptized, she smashed all her father's idols to pieces.

Since Saint Irene had dedicated herself to Christ, she refused to marry any of the suitors her father had chosen for her. When Licinius learned that his daughter refused to worship the pagan gods, he was furious. He attempted to turn her from Christ by having her tortured. She was tied up and thrown beneath the hooves of wild horses so that they might trample her to death, but the horses remained motionless. Instead of harming the saint, one of the horses charged Licinius, seized his right hand and tore it from his arm. Then it knocked Licinius down and began to trample him to death. This caused a great deal of confusion among the people there but Irene consoled them with the words of Christ: "All things are possible to the one who believes" (Mark 9: 23). And indeed, with wondrous faith, she prayed and through her prayers Licinius rose unharmed in the presence of many eyewitnesses with his hand intact. Then, Licinius and his wife were baptized as Christians, along with almost 3000 others who turned away from the worship of inanimate idols. Licinius abandoned his domain and lived in the tower he had built for his daughter. There he spent the rest of his life in repentance.

Saint Irene lived in the house of her teacher Apellian, and she began to preach Christ among the pagans, leading them to the path of salvation. When Sedekias (Yesdegerd), the new prefect of the city, heard of the miracles performed by the saint, he summoned Apellian and questioned him about Irene's manner of life. Apellian replied that Irene, like other Christians, lived in strict temperance, devoting herself to constant prayer and reading holy books. Sedekias summoned the saint to him and urged her to stop preaching about Christ. He also attempted to force her to sacrifice to the idols. Saint Irene staunchly confessed her faith before the prefect, not fearing his wrath, and prepared to undergo suffering for Christ. By order of Sedekias she was thrown into a pit filled with vipers and serpents. The saint spent ten days in the pit and remained unharmed, for an angel of the Lord protected her and brought her food. Sedekias ascribed this miracle to sorcery, and he subjected Saint Irene to many other tortures, but she remained unharmed. Under the influence of her preaching and miracles even more people were converted to Christ, and turned away from the worship of inanimate idols.

Sedekias was deposed by his son Sapor, who persecuted Christians with an even greater zeal than his father had done. Saint Irene went to her hometown of Magedon in Persia to meet Sapor and his army, and ask him to end the persecution. When he refused, Saint Irene prayed and his entire army was blinded. She prayed again and they received their sight once more. In spite of this, Sapor refused to recognize the power of God. Because of his insolence, he was struck and killed by a bolt of lightning.

After this, Saint Irene walked into the city and performed many miracles. She returned to the tower built by her father, accompanied by the priest Timothy. Through her teaching, she converted five thousand people to Christ.

Next, the saint went to the city of Callinicus, or Callinicum (possibly on the Euphrates River in Syria). The ruler of that place was King Numerian, the son of Sebastian. When she began to teach about Christ, she was arrested and tortured by the pagan authorities. They enclosed her inside three bronze oxen, one after another, which were heated until they were red-hot. When the Great Martyr was placed within the third ox, it began to walk about, and then it split asunder. Saint Irene emerged from it as if from the fires of hell. This resulted in thousands of souls converting to the faith of Christ. Sensing the approach of death, Numerian instructed his eparch Babdonus to continue torturing the saint in order to force her to sacrifice to idols. Once again, the tortures were ineffective, and many people turned to Christ.

Christ's holy martyr then traveled to the city of Constantina, forty miles northeast of Edessa. By 330, the Persian king Sapor II (309-379) had heard of Saint Irene's great miracles. To prevent her from winning more people to Christ, she was arrested, beheaded, and then buried. However, God sent an angel to raise her up again, and she went into the city of Mesembria. After seeing her alive and hearing her preach, the local king was baptized with many of his subjects.

Wishing to convert even more pagans to Christianity, Saint Irene went to Ephesus, where she taught the people and performed many miracles. The Lord revealed to her that the end of her life was approaching. Then Saint Irene left the city accompanied by six people, including her former teacher Apellian. On the outskirts of the town, she found a new tomb in which no one had ever been buried. After making the Sign of the Cross, she went inside, directing her companions to seal the entrance to the cave with a large stone, which they did. She also told them that that no one should move the stone until four days had passed.

Apellian returned after only two days, and found that the stone had been rolled away and the tomb was empty. There are conflicting accounts about her holy relics being taken to Constantinople and other places, including Patras, Samos, and Patmos. According to the *Western Martyrologies*, Saint Irene was martyred in Thessaloniki after being thrown into the fire, while according to the *Menologion* of Emperor Basil II; Saint Irene completed her martyric contest by being beheaded.

Saint Irene led thousands of people to Christ through her preaching, and by her example. The Church continues to honor her memory and to seek her heavenly intercession. She is invoked by those wishing to effect a swift and happy marriage. In Greece, she is also the patron saint of policemen. Saint Irene is also one of the twelve Virgin Martyrs who appeared to Saint Seraphim of Sarov (January 2) and the Diveyevo nun Eupraxia on the Feast of the Annunciation in 1831. By her holy prayers, may the Lord have mercy upon us and save us. Amen.

Righteous Job the Long-Suffering

May 6

The righteous Job (whose name means “persecuted”), God’s faithful servant, was the perfect image of every virtue. The son of Zarah and Bossorha (Job 42), Job was a fifth-generation descendent of Abraham. He was a truthful, righteous, patient and pious man who abstained from every evil thing. Job was very rich and blessed by God in all things, as was no other son of Ausis (his country, which lay between Idoumea and Arabia). However, divine condescension permitted him to be tested.

Job lost his children, his wealth, his glory, and every consolation all at once. His entire body became a terrible wound covered with boils. Yet he remained steadfast and patient in the face of his misfortune for seven years, always giving thanks to God.

Later, God restored his former prosperity, and he had twice as much as before. Job lived for 170 years after his misfortune, completing his earthly life in 1350 B.C. at the age of 240. Some authorities say that Job’s afflictions lasted only one year, and that afterwards he lived for 140 years, reaching the age of 210.

Job’s explanations are among the most poetic writings in the Old Testament book which bears his name. It is one of the most edifying portions of Holy Scripture. Job teaches us that we must endure life’s adversities patiently and with trust in God. As Saint Anthony the Great (January 17) says, without temptations, it is impossible for the faithful to be saved.

The Orthodox Church reads the book of Job, the first of the seven wisdom books of the Old Testament, during Holy Week, drawing a parallel between Job and Christ as righteous men who suffered through no fault of their own. God allowed Satan to afflict Job so that his faithfulness would be proven. Christ, the only sinless one, suffered voluntarily for our sins. The Septuagint text of Job 42:17 says that Job “will rise again with those whom the Lord raises up.” This passage is read on Great and Holy Friday, when the composite Gospel at Vespers speaks of the tombs being opened at the moment the Savior died on the Cross, and the bodies of the saints were raised, and they appeared to many after Christ’s Resurrection (Matthew.27:52).



**Great Martyr Irene
May 5**

**Righteous Job, the Long-Suffering
May 6**



UPCOMING DIOCESAN & PARISH EVENTS

St Olymphia Orthodox Church – Next Parish Council Meeting

7:30 PM Monday, May 8, 2023

Diocesan Altar Servers Retreat

Saturday, May 20

Holy Resurrection Church, Wayne, NJ

Presbyters’ Council Meeting

Thursday, June 1, at 11:00 AM

Diocesan Chancery, Bronxville NY

Note Time Change! WEEKDAY VESPERS AT THE HERMITAGE OF ST OLYMPIA
Weekdays at 5 PM

For information please contact Mother Sophronia at mothersophronia@gmail.com
or via Facebook: Nun Sophronia Hofstead.