



*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, Feb 3, 10
Great Vespers: 5pm

Sunday, Feb 4, 11
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, NY 13617**

**Leavetaking of the Meeting of our Lord and Savior Jesus
Christ in the Temple
February 9**



**The Meeting of Our Lord in the Temple
February 2, Troparion**

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Full of Grace!
From you shone the Sun of Righteousness,
Christ our God,
enlightening those who sat in darkness.
Rejoice and be glad, O righteous Elder,
you accepted in your arms
the Redeemer of our souls,
Who grants us the Resurrection!

*By Thy nativity, Thou didst sanctify the Virgin's womb. And didst bless
Simeon's hands, O Christ our God. Now Thou hast come and saved us
through love. Grant peace to all Orthodox Christians, O only Lover of
man*
Kontakion.

**Baptism and Chrismation Service
4 PM, Saturday, February 3, 2024**

**Baptism & Chrismation: Ryan, Heather, and Holly Carr. Matthew Gomm
Chrismation: Julio and Coral Gurrea, Jonathan Jones**

Glory to God!
***Welcome to the Orthodox Church
and to the parish of Saint Olympia Orthodox Church***

The Sacraments

From *The Orthodox Faith* - Volume II: Worship

By Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko

The sacraments in the Orthodox Church are officially called the “holy mysteries.” Usually seven sacraments are counted: baptism, chrismation (or confirmation), holy eucharist, penance, matrimony, holy orders and the unction of the sick.

The practice of counting the sacraments was adopted in the Orthodox Church from the Roman Catholics. It is not an ancient practice of the Church and, in many ways, it tends to be misleading since it appears that there are just seven specific rites which are “sacraments” and that all other aspects of the life of the Church are essentially different from these particular actions. The more ancient and traditional practice of the Orthodox Church is to consider everything which is in and of the Church as sacramental or mystical.

The Church may be defined as the new life in Christ. It is man’s life lived by the Holy Spirit in union with God. All aspects of the new life of the Church participate in the mystery of salvation. In Christ and the Holy Spirit everything which is sinful and dead becomes holy and alive by the power of God the Father. And so in Christ and the Holy Spirit everything in the Church becomes a sacrament, an element of the mystery of the Kingdom of God as it is already being experienced in the life of this world.

Viewing the Church as the new and eternal life of the Kingdom of God given to man by God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, we understand first of all that for life to exist there must be birth. The birth into the eternal life of God is the mystery of baptism. But birth is not enough for living; there must be the ongoing possibility of life: its power, energy and force. Thus, the mystery of chrismation is the gift of the power to live the life of Christ which is born in man by baptism. It is the gift of the “all-holy and good and life-creating Spirit” to man.

Life also must be sustained. This is normally done by eating and drinking. Food is the nourishment which keeps us alive. It is man’s communion with creation which keeps him existing. But, naturally speaking, our normal eating and drinking does not keep us alive forever. Our natural communion with the world is a communion to death. We need eating and drinking of a special food which nourishes us for eternal life. This food is the “mystical supper of the Son of God,” the body and blood of Christ, the mystery of the holy eucharist—the communion to Life Itself.

For life to be truly perfect, holy and good, there must also be a particular mystery about marriage and the bearing of children. In this world all who are born are born to die, and even the most perfect of human love stands under the condemnation: “. . . until death do you part.” The mystery of Christian marriage transforms human love, childbearing, and family communities into realities of eternal proportion and significance. In marriage we are blessed by God for unending friendship and love. We are blessed so that the fruit of our love, the begetting of our children and the life of our families will be not “unto death” but unto life everlasting.

Until the final establishment of the Kingdom of God, our life remains under the attack of its demonic enemies: sin, sickness, suffering, sorrow and death. The mystery of penance is the remedy for spiritual sickness. It allows us to turn again to God, to be taken back, to be forgiven and to be received once more into the life of God from which our sins have separated us. And the mystery of holy unction is the remedy for our physical sickness which is the power of sin over our bodies, our inevitable union with suffering and death. Holy unction allows us to be healed; to suffer, not “unto death” but, once more, unto life everlasting. It is the incorporation of our wounds into the life-creating cross of Christ.

The mystery, finally, which allows the perfection of divine life to be ours in all of its fullness and power in this world is the mystery of the Church itself. And most specifically within the Church, we have the mystery of holy orders: the sacrament of priesthood, ministry, teaching and pastoral care. The clergy of the church—bishops, priests, and deacons—exist for no other purpose than to make manifest, present and powerful in the Church the divine life of the Kingdom of God to all men while still living in this world.

Thus, from birth to death, in good times and bad, in every aspect of worldly existence, real life—life as God has created and saved and sanctified it to be—is given to us in the Church. This is Christ’s express purpose and wish, the very object of his coming to the world: “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10.10).

The Church as the gift of life eternal is by its very nature, in its fullness and entirety, a mystical and sacramental reality. It is the life of the Kingdom of God given already to those who believe. And thus, within the Church, everything we do—our prayers, blessings, good works, thoughts, actions—everything participates in the life which has no end. In this sense everything which is in the Church and of the Church is a sacrament of the Kingdom of God.

Baptism

The practice of baptism as a religious symbol did not begin with Jesus. Baptism, which means literally the immersion in water, was practiced among the people of the Old Testament as well as the people who belonged to pagan religions. The universal meaning of baptism is that of “starting anew,” of dying to an old, way of life and being born again into a

new way of life. Thus, baptism was always connected with repentance which means a moral conversion, a “change of mind,” a change in living from something old and bad to something new and good.

Thus, in the Gospel we find John the Baptist baptizing the people as a sign of repentance in preparation for the Kingdom of God which was coming to men with Christ the Messiah. Christ himself was baptized by John not because he was sinful and needed to repent, but because in allowing himself to be baptized he showed that indeed he was God’s “Beloved Son,” the Saviour and Messiah, the “Lamb of God who takes upon himself the sins of the world” (See Matthew 3, Mark 1, Luke 3, John 1–3).

In the Christian Church the practice of baptism takes on a new and particular significance. It no longer remains merely a sign of moral change and spiritual rebirth. It becomes very specifically the act of a person’s death and resurrection in and with Jesus. Christian baptism is man’s participation in the event of Easter. It is a “new birth by water and the Holy Spirit” into the Kingdom of God (John 3.5).

Baptism in the Church begins with the rejection of Satan and the acceptance of Christ. Before being baptized, a person—or his sponsors or godparents for him—officially proclaims the symbol of Christian faith, the Creed. Because the godparent speaks on behalf of the child, sponsors his entrance into the Church and “receives” the child out of the baptismal waters into the Church and cares for his spiritual life, the godparent himself must be a member of the Church.

After the proclamation of faith, the baptismal water is prayed over and blessed as the sign of the goodness of God’s creation. The person to be baptized is also prayed over and blessed with sanctified oil as the sign that his creation by God is holy and good. And then, after the solemn proclamation of “Alleluia” (from Hebrew, meaning “God be praised”), the person is immersed three times in the water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Through the act of immersion, the baptized person dies to this world and is born again in the resurrection of Christ into eternal life. He is clothed with the “garments of salvation” symbolized by the white baptismal robe which is the “new humanity” of Jesus himself who is the new and heavenly Adam (See John 3, Romans 5, 1 Corinthians 15). Thus, the words of the Apostle Paul are chanted as the newly-baptized is led in procession around the baptismal font three times as the symbol of his procession to the Kingdom of God and his entrance into eternal life: “For as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia” (Galatians 3.27).

In ancient times this procession was made from the baptistery to the church where the newly-baptized received Holy Communion at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Baptisms were normally done in connection with the Easter Liturgy; our present procession around the church building on Easter night is nothing more than our remembrance that we are baptized, that we have left the life of this world to enter the eternal life of the Risen Christ in the Kingdom of God. This new life is given to us in the life of the Church, most specifically in the Divine Liturgy.

Before the baptismal procession and the reading of the Epistle and the Gospel is fulfilled in the reception of Holy Communion, however, the newly-baptized is given the gift of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of Chrismation.

The Vespers and Matins of the feast of the Meeting of the Lord are filled with hymns on this theme. The Divine Liturgy is celebrated with the lines from the canticle of Mary forming the prokeimenon and the words of Simeon being the verses for the Alleluia. The gospel readings tell of the meeting, while the Old Testament readings at Vespers refer to the Law of the purification in Leviticus, the vision of Isaiah in the Temple of the Thrice-Holy Lord, and the gift of faith to the Egyptians prophesied by Isaiah when the light of the Lord shall be a “revelation to the Gentiles” (Luke 2.32).

The celebration of the Meeting of the Lord in the church is not merely a historical commemoration. Inspired by the same Holy Spirit as Simeon, and led by the same Spirit into the Church of the Messiah, the members of the Church also can claim their own “meeting” with the Lord, and so also can witness that they too can “depart in peace” since their eyes have seen the salvation of God in the person of his Christ.

Chrismation

In the sacrament of Chrismation we receive “the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit” (See Romans 8, 1 Corinthians 6, 2 Corinthians 1.21–22). If baptism is our personal participation in Easter—the death and resurrection of Christ, then chrismation is our personal participation in Pentecost—the coming of the Holy Spirit upon us.

The sacrament of chrismation, also called confirmation, is always done in the Orthodox Church together with baptism. Just as Easter has no meaning for the world without Pentecost, so baptism has no meaning for the Christian without chrismation. In this understanding and practice, the Orthodox Church differs from the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches where the two sacraments are often separated and given other interpretations than those found in traditional Orthodoxy.

Chrismation, the gift of the Holy Spirit, is performed in the Orthodox Church by anointing all parts of the person’s body with the special oil called holy chrism. This oil, also called myrrh is prepared by the bishops of the Church on Holy Thursday. It is used in chrismation to show that the gift of the Spirit was originally given to men through the apostles of Christ, whose formal successors in the world are the bishops of the Church (see Acts 8.14; 19.1–7).

In chrismation a person is given the “power from on high” (Acts 1–2), the gift of the Spirit of God, in order to live the new life received in baptism. He is anointed, just as Christ the Messiah is the Anointed One of God. He becomes—as the fathers of the Church dared to put it—a “christ” together with Jesus. Thus, through chrismation we become a “christ,” a son of God, a person upon whom the Holy Spirit dwells, a person in whom the Holy Spirit lives and acts—as long as we want him and cooperate with his powerful and holy inspiration.

Thus, it is only after our chrismation that the baptismal procession is made and that we hear the epistle and the gospel of our salvation and illumination in Christ.

After the baptism and chrismation the person newly-received into God’s family is tonsured. The tonsure, which is the cutting of hair from the head in the sign of the cross, is the sign that the person completely offers himself to God—hair being the symbol of strength (Judges 16.17). Thus, until the fifteenth century the clergy of the Orthodox Church—the “professional Christians,” so to speak—wore the tonsure all their lives to show that their strength was in God.

The Rite of Churching

Together with being baptized and chrismated, the new-born child is also “churched.” The rite of churching imitates the offering of male children to the temple according to the law of the Old Testament, particularly the offering of Christ on the fortieth day after his birth (Lk 2.22). Because of this fact, baptism in the Orthodox tradition came to be prescribed for the fortieth day or thereabouts. In the New Testament Church both male and female children are formally presented to God in the Church with special prayers at this time.

Also at this time, once more in imitation of Old Testament practice, the mother of the new-born child is also “churched.” Here we have the specific example of the purification ritual of Jesus’ mother Mary (Luke 2.22). In the Orthodox tradition the churching of the mother is her re-entry into the assembly of God’s people after her participation with God in the holy act of birth and after her separation from the Liturgy during her confinement. Thus, the mother is blessed to enter once more into communion with the mystery of Christ’s Body and Blood in the Divine Liturgy of the Church from which she has been necessarily absent.

The new mother should be churched before the baptism of her infant so that she can be present at the sacramental entrance of her child into the Kingdom of Christ. The official service book indicates that this should be done. It is also the Orthodox tradition that the mysteries of baptism and chrismation, called officially “holy illumination,” are fulfilled in the immediate reception by the “newly-enlightened” of Holy Communion in the eucharistic liturgy of the Church. This is the case with infants as well as adults.

The Epistle of Baptism-Chrismation

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His. We know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For He who has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him. For we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him. The death He died he died to sin, once for all, but the life He lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. (Romans 6.3–11)

The Gospel of Baptism-Chrismation

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.” (Matthew 28.16–20)



Greatmartyr Theodore Stratelates “the General”

February 8

*Truly enlisted with the King of Heaven,
you became an outstanding general for Him,
passion-bearer Theodore;
you armed yourself wisely with the weapons of faith
and conquered hordes of demons,
revealing yourself as a victorious athlete.
Therefore, in faith we always call you blessed.*

Troparion

PARISH WISH LIST

A wish list to help our parish grow!

SPECIAL, one-time needs or items

LED lights or lanterns e.g. strings of Christmas lights, to illuminate our entrances temporarily.
(Electrical work needed must be postponed until the summer.)

RECURRING needs:

Paper Plates (small and large), **Paper Bowls**, **Hot Cups**
Napkins
Plastic Utensils, especially **Forks**
Paper Towels
Toilet Paper

Holy Mother Olympia, pray to God for us!

UPCOMING DIOCESAN & PARISH EVENTS

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING: Sunday, February 4 after Divine Liturgy

Presbyters Council Meeting

Thursday, February 22, 11 AM

Diocesan Chancery

Bronxville, NY

WEEKDAY VESPERS 4 PM (Winter Time!) AT THE HERMITAGE OF ST OLYMPIA

For information please contact Mother Sophronia at mothersophronia@gmail.com

or via Facebook: Nun Sophronia Hofstead.

Orthodox Church in America • Diocese of New York and New Jersey

St. Andrew's
Camp
and Retreat Center

Lenten Women's Retreat

FRIDAY, MARCH 22 - SUNDAY MARCH 24, 2024

Register at:
http://portal.campnetwork.com/Register/Register.php?camp_id=397695

\$125 for the Weekend
(\$90 for Saturday only)

Keynote Speaker: Presbyteria Krista Federnhak, MS, RD
Pres. Krista is an Orthodox Christian, wife, and registered dietitian offering Christian faith-based insights into caring for body and soul alike. She completed her studies in nutritional science at Cornell University. Informed by a non-diet eating approach and rooted in the wisdom of the Orthodox faith, Krista works together with clients on a path towards healing their relationship with food and accomplishing health goals through small, sustainable lifestyle changes. Catch her on the Ancient Faith Radio Podcast: Food Freedom through Christ, or on Instagram @theorthodoxdietitian.

Also attending: Archbishop Michael

For more information
Call: 315-869-4138 or
Email: kmry@standrewscamp.org