

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

Fr. Gregory Fedorchak, Parish Rector 607-427-3286, father.fedorchak@gmail.com

Upcoming Services:

May 6, Tuesday

6pm – Molieben to St. Alexis Toth

May 9, Friday

8am – Divine Liturgy (Ss. Christopher + Isaiah)

May 10, Saturday

5pm – Great Vespers

May 11, Sunday of the Paralytic

10am – Divine Liturgy (9:40am Hours)

May 13, Tuesday

6pm – Vespers for the Midfeast

May 14, Wednesday

8am – Divine Liturgy (Midfeast of Pentecost)

May 17, Saturday

5pm – Great Vespers

May 18, Sunday of the Samaritan Woman

10am – Divine Liturgy (9:40am Hours)

Sunday of the Paralytic

May 11



*Weekday Daily Vespers, 5pm @ the Hermitage

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



Inexhaustible Chalice Icon of the Mother of God May 5

Your womb was a Holy Throne, containing Christ God, the Heavenly Bread, whoever eats it will not die; as the Nourisher of all, the Theotokos, has said.

Kontakion

Sunday of the Paralytic

Close to the Sheep's Gate in Jerusalem, there was a pool, which was called the Sheep's Pool. It had round about it five porches, that is, five sets of pillars supporting a domed roof. Under this roof there lay very many sick people with various maladies, awaiting the moving of the water. The first to step in after the troubling of the water was healed immediately of whatever malady he had.

It was there that the paralytic of today's Gospel was lying, tormented by his infirmity of thirty-eight years. When Christ beheld him, He asked him, "Wilt thou be made whole?" And he answered with a quiet and meek voice, "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool." The Lord said unto him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." And straightaway the man was made whole and took up his bed. Walking in the presence of all, he departed rejoicing to his own house. According to the expounders of the Gospels, the Lord Jesus healed this paralytic during the days of the Passover, when He had gone to Jerusalem for the Feast, and dwelt there teaching and working miracles. According to Saint John the Evangelist, this miracle took place on the Sabbath.

The Paralytic and the Pool

By Father Lawrence Farley

Reflections in Christ, May 10, 2014

One wonders sometimes about why the Gospel story of the healing of the paralytic was chosen for the Paschal season. One understands why the stories of Thomas and the Myrrh-bearers were chosen, but the paralytic? Perhaps our incomprehension is rooted in our modern separation of Pascha from baptism. In the early Church from at least the time of Tertullian (d. 220), Pascha was considered as *the* time for baptism, and the spectacle of many catechumens lining up to be baptized in the baptistery (a separate building in those days) and then processing with solemn joy into the church to be anointed with laying on of hands by the bishop forged an indelible link in people's minds between Pascha and baptism. Even now in our Pascha-night Liturgy, in place of the Trisagion hymn we sing "As many as have been baptized into Christ." In early tradition, Pascha meant baptism and baptism always had a paschal feel to it. The two were inextricably linked.

That might explain why all the Sunday Gospels in the Paschal season after the Sunday of the Myrrh-bearers focus upon water: the Samaritan woman finds Christ by the well, and the blind man finds salvation as he washes in the pool of Siloam. Similarly, the paralytic encounters Christ as he sat by the waters of Bethesda. In all these Gospels, we find water, a clear echo of baptism for those to whom baptism was linked with Pascha. As early as Tertullian (in his book *On Baptism*, chapter 5), the presumed descent of the angel into the Bethesda pool foreshadowed the spiritual and transformative power of Christian baptism.

As we examine the story of the paralytic in greater depth, it is important to see that in its original context the Bethesda pool was not a source of salvation for the paralytic, but a rival alternative to it, if not its positive impediment. Remember the details of the story: the paralytic sat languishing by the pool, thirty-eight years in his wretched condition, hoping for healing. When the pool's waters were stirred (by an angel, as everyone thought), he hoped to be the first one into the pool to soak up the angel's divine power and be cured, but being paralyzed, he was too slow, and someone always beat him to the pool. So, he waited and waited, hoping to find salvation one day in the pool.

It was there that Jesus found him. When Jesus asked him, "Do you want to be healed?" (John 5:6), he didn't say, "Yes Lord, please heal me!" He was still hoping to get into the pool, and he answered, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is troubled, and while I am going another steps down before me." But salvation wasn't in the

pool. It was in Jesus. Jesus simply said, “Rise, take your pallet, and walk,” and the man did. He didn’t need the pool after all. All he needed was Jesus.

In John’s subtext, the pool functions as an image of the Law and the man as an image of Israel hoping to find salvation in the Law. The paralytic had been long in his condition, even as Israel had long been waiting for divine salvation. The Bethesda pool was thought to have been stirred by an angel, even as the Law had been given by angels (Acts 7:53). The pool even had five porticoes (John 5:4), even as the Mosaic Law had five books—a detail noticed by Saint Augustine. Like the paralytic who had to stop relying on the pool for salvation and turn instead to Christ, so Israel had to stop relying upon the Law to save them, and also turn to Christ. The old was giving place to the new.

We see this contrast between the old and the new throughout John’s Gospel: not Jewish water, but Christ’s wine, not the old Temple, but Christ’s body, not the manna in the wilderness, but Christ’s flesh. Christian faith involved turning from the old ways to the new, as sacred Jewish history veered upward into the Kingdom and the eschaton. It was as Isaiah foretold long ago: “Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you know perceive it?” (Isaiah 43:18-19). This is the newness of Pascha, and the new life given to us in baptism. The paralytic found this life not in the old pool, but in the living Christ. Our Paschal season reminds us that this is where we find new life and constant renewal as well.

Inexhaustible Chalice Icon of the Mother of God

May 5

According to the iconographic models, the Inexhaustible Chalice Icon of the Mother of God belongs to the Orans type -the Mother of God is depicted with her hands upraised, before her is the Divine Infant standing in the chalice. This is the Communion Chalice – an inexhaustible source of spiritual joy and consolation. The Most Holy Theotokos prays for all sinners, and declares that the Inexhaustible Chalice of heavenly help and mercy is prepared for every sufferer.

The Icon's appearance was preceded by an unusual incident which occurred in 1878 in Tula Province. A retired soldier was possessed by the passion of drunkenness. He drank everything that he had, and soon he became a beggar. His legs were paralyzed from abusing alcohol, but that didn't stop him, and he continued to drink. Once, in a dream, the former soldier, now a peasant, saw an Elder who ordered him to go to the city of Serpukhov to the Monastery of the Sovereign Lady Theotokos, where the Inexhaustible Chalice Icon of the Mother of God was located, and to have a Moleben served before it.

Since he had no money, and his legs were paralyzed, the peasant was unable to go. Then the Holy Elder appeared to him a second and a third time, menacingly commanding him to do as he was told. The retired soldier crawled to Serpukhov on all fours, stopping in one of the villages along the way to rest. To alleviate the man's pain and suffering, the old landlady rubbed his legs and laid him on the stove. The next day the soldier felt better, but the woman kept him for another night, rubbing his sore legs again. Leaning on two sticks, and then just one, the peasant slowly reached Serpukhov.

In the Monastery of the Sovereign Lady, he told the nuns about his wondrous dreams and asked that a Moleben be served before the Inexhaustible Chalice Icon of the Mother of God. His request confused the nuns, for no one in the Monastery knew of such an icon. Only after some time did they find the Icon hanging in the passage from the temple to the sacristy. On the reverse side was the inscription "Inexhaustible Chalice." In the countenance of Saint Barlaam of Serpukhov (May 5), the disciple of the Metropolitan Alexei, the peasant recognized the Holy Elder who had appeared to him in his dreams. The former soldier returned home from Serpukhov already freed from his pernicious passion.

News of the wonderworking Icon quickly spread throughout Russia. People suffering from drunkenness, as well as their relatives and friends, hastened to offer prayers to the Most Holy Theotokos asking her to heal them of their affliction. Many came afterward to thank the Sovereign Lady for her great mercy.

The wonderworking Inexhaustible Chalice Icon was kept in the Monastery of the Sovereign Lady until 1919, and after its closure, it was moved to the Cathedral of Saint Nicholas the White on Kaluzhskaya Street. The further fate of the original Icon is unknown.

In 1993, in Serpukhov's Vysotsk Monastery, and in 1995 in the revived Monastery of the Sovereign Lady, copies of the wonderworking Icon were made, and all the proportions and style characteristic of the original were preserved. All this marked the beginning of the revival of the Icon's veneration after many years of atheism.

People come from all over Russia, and from other countries, to venerate the Inexhaustible Chalice Icon. The wonderworking Icon is renowned as a speedy healer of those suffering from the ailments of drug addiction, alcoholism, and smoking. Notice that the Icon not only heals, but also helps to change a person's way of life, leading him to acknowledge his sins, repent, and return to a godly life.

Unfortunately, the exact day on which the Icon was revealed is not known. In the XIX century, the celebration in honor of the Inexhaustible Chalice Icon took place on November 27 (the same day as the icon of the Mother of God of the Sign) since both of these icons are similar in appearance.

At the end of the XX century, after the restoration of veneration of the Inexhaustible Chalice Icon, its celebration was made to coincide with the Feast Day of Venerable Barlaam of Serpukhov (May 5), since the revelation of the wonderworking Icon occurred through the intercession of that Saint. In 1997, with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Alexei II, it was decided to celebrate the Church-wide Feast of the Inexhaustible Chalice Icon of the Mother of God on May 5.

O believers, let us turn today to the Divine and wonderworking Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God, who fills the hearts of the faithful with her mercy from the heavenly Ineffable Chalice, and shows them miracles; seeing and hearing about these, we celebrate spiritually and fervently exclaim: "Most merciful Sovereign Lady, heal our illnesses and passions, entreating your Son Christ God to save our souls."

Troparion

Martyr Christopher of Lycia, and, with him, the Martyrs Callinika and Aquilina

May 9

The Holy Martyr Christopher lived during the third century and suffered about the year 250, during the reign of the emperor Decius (249-251). There are various accounts of his life and miracles, and he is widely venerated throughout the world. Saint Christopher is especially venerated in Italy, where people pray to him in times of contagious diseases.

There are various suggestions about his descent. Some historians believe that he was descended from the Canaanites, while others say from the "Cynoscephalai" [literally "dog-heads"] of Thessaly.

Saint Christopher was a man of great stature and unusual strength. According to tradition, Saint Christopher was very handsome, but wishing to avoid temptation for himself and others, he asked the Lord to give him an unattractive face, which was done. Before Baptism he was named Reprebus [Reprobate] because his disfigured appearance. Even before Baptism, Reprebus confessed his faith in Christ and denounced those who persecuted Christians. Consequently, a certain Bacchus gave him a beating, which he endured with humility.

Because of his renowned strength, 200 soldiers were assigned to bring him before the emperor Decius. Reprebus submitted without resistance. Several miracles occurred along the way; a dry stick blossomed in the saint's hand, loaves of bread were multiplied through his prayers, and the travellers had no lack thereof. This is similar to the multiplication of loaves in the wilderness by the Savior. The soldiers surrounding Reprebus were astonished at these miracles. They came to believe in Christ and they were baptized along with Reprebus by Saint Babylus of Antioch (September 4).

Christopher once made a vow to serve the greatest king in the world, so he first offered to serve the local king. Seeing that the king feared the devil, Christopher thought he would leave the king to serve Satan. Learning that the devil feared Christ, Christopher went in search of Him. Saint Babylus of Antioch told him that he could best serve Christ by doing well the task for which he was best suited. Therefore, he became a ferryman, carrying people across a river on his shoulders. One stormy night, Christopher carried a Child Who insisted on being taken across at that very moment. With every step Christopher took, the Child seemed to become heavier. Halfway across the stream, Christopher felt that his strength would give out, and that he and the Child would be drowned in the river. As they reached the other side, the Child told him that he had just carried all the sins of the world on his shoulders. Then He ordered Christopher to plant his walking stick in the ground. As he did so, the stick grew into a giant tree. Then he recognized Christ, the King Whom he had vowed to serve.

Saint Christopher was brought before the emperor, who tried to make him renounce Christ, not by force but by cunning. He summoned two profligate women, Callinika and Aquilina, and commanded them to persuade Christopher to deny Christ, and to offer sacrifice to idols. Instead, the women were converted to Christ by Saint Christopher. When they returned to the emperor, they declared themselves to be Christians. Therefore, they were subjected to fierce beatings, and so they received the crown of martyrdom.

Decius also sentenced to execution the soldiers who had been sent after Saint Christopher, but who now believed in Christ. The emperor ordered that the martyr be thrown into a red-hot metal box. Saint Christopher, however, did not experience any suffering and he remained unharmed. After many fierce torments they finally beheaded the martyr with a sword. This occurred in the year 250 in Lycia. By his miracles the holy Martyr Christopher converted as many as 50,000 pagans to Christ, as Saint Ambrose of Milan testifies. The relics of Saint Christopher were later transferred to Toledo (Spain), and still later to the abbey of Saint Denis in France.

In Greece, many churches place the icon of Saint Christopher at the entrance so that people can see it as they enter and leave the building. There is a rhyming couplet in Greek which says, “When you see Christopher, you can walk in safety.” This reflects the belief that whoever gazes upon the icon of Saint Christopher will not meet with sudden or accidental death that day.

The name Christopher means “Christ-bearer.” This can refer to the saint carrying the Savior across the river, and it may also refer to Saint Christopher bearing Christ within himself (Galatians 2:20)...



Martyr Christopher of Lycia
May 9

You were terrifying both in might and countenance: and willingly suffered temptation from your persecutors; those men and women who sought to arouse the fire of lust in you, but they followed you to martyrdom. Therefore, you are our strong protector, O Great Martyr Christopher.

Kontakion

Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian
May 8, September 26

O beloved Apostle of Christ our God, come quickly to deliver your helpless people. He on whose breast you leaned, will accept you as intercessor. Entreat Him, O Theologian, to disperse the clouds of darkness, granting us peace and great mercy!

Troparion



Ask the Priest

Why are Priests called “Father”?

The role of spiritual fathers and teachers was carried over from Judaism. For example, Elisha cries, “My father, my father!” to Elijah as the latter is carried up to heaven in a whirlwind (4 Kgs. 2:12). Later, Elisha himself is called a father by the king of Israel (4 Kgs. 6:21). Job calls himself a “father to the poor” (Job 29:16), Joseph becomes a father to Pharaoh (Gen. 45:8).

The same use of “Father” for spiritual fatherhood pervades the New Testament as well. In Acts 7:2, where Stephen refers to “our father Abraham,” or in Romans 9:10, where Paul speaks of “our father Isaac.” Paul’s repeated use of, “My son Timothy” implies his own spiritual fatherhood.

Perhaps the most pointed New Testament reference to the theology of the spiritual fatherhood of priests is Paul’s statement, “I do not write this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel” (1 Cor. 4:14–15). In fact, John also addresses men in his congregations as “fathers” (1 Jn. 2:13–14).

Some Christians interpret Matthew 23:9 literally to refute calling priests “Father.” However, this argument goes against the Old Testament, New Testament, and Church Tradition. The books of the Bible were chosen by people who used the word “father” regularly. Here is an excellent video on the topic from the *Patristix* series entitled, “Call No Man Father”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HiC9amRHXDU>.

Fr. Gregory loves your questions. Please email any questions you have or ask him in person.

DIOCESAN ALTAR SERVER RETREATS

With His Eminence, Archbishop MICHAEL

Two Retreats in the Diocese:

Saturday, May 31, 2025

Holy Resurrection Church, 285 French Hill Road, Wayne, NJ

Saturday, June 28, 2025

Saints Peter and Paul Church, 210 Hill Avenue, Endicott, NY

Adult altar servers and boys are invited.



**9:30 AM – Greeting the Archbishop,
Followed by Vesting of His Eminence
and Celebration of the Hierarchical Liturgy**

12:00 PM – Brunch

1:00 PM – Teaching Sessions

4:00 PM – Conclusion of Sessions

5:00 PM – Great Vespers

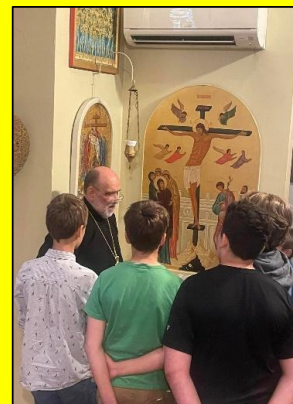
6:00 PM – Closing Dinner

**Please bring a GOLD or WHITE stikhar
(server's vestment).**

Please Register by Tuesday, May 27, by clicking here:

<https://form.jotform.com/241407055386153>

Or use the QR Code below.



Sundays of the Pentecostarion

 **BASILICA.RO**



**Sunday of the
Resurrection
of the Lord**



**Sunday of the Holy
Apostle Thomas**



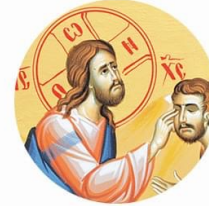
**Sunday of the
Myrrhbearing
Women**



**Sunday of
the Paralytic**



**Sunday of the
Samaritan Woman**



**Sunday of the
Blind Man**



**Sunday of the Holy
Fathers of the 1st
Ecumenical Council**



**Sunday of the
Holy Pentecost**



**Sunday of
All Saints**



*Festival of Sacred Music and Text
St. Mary's in Potsdam, April 27, 2025*

UPCOMING PARISH EVENTS

Mother's Day BBQ

This coming Sunday, in honor of Mother's Day, we will host a BBQ in place of our typical coffee hour. Feel free to bring meats to grill or a side/dessert to share.

Parish Council Meeting

Tuesday, May 20, 7:30 PM

Book Club (Movie Night: *Babette's Feast*)

Thursday, May 15, 6:15 PM at the Catholic Church Rectory Living Room (17 Lawrence Ave., Potsdam). We will watch *Babette's Feast* followed by a discussion of the sacramental life. Please RSVP to Joseph Stark.

UPCOMING DIOCESAN EVENTS

Young Adult Retreat

Friday, May 16 – Sunday, May 18 @ St. Andrew's Camp. Open to Orthodox young adults, catechumens, and inquirers age 18-35. For questions, contact LonnBologna@gmail.com or text 203-258-5324.

Parish Council Conference, NYS Deanery West

Saturday, June 14, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM at SS. Peter and Paul Church, Syracuse, NY. The theme of the 2025 Parish Council Conferences is "Integrating New Converts into Our Parish Families."

Altar Server Retreat, NYS Deanery

Saturday, June 28 at Ss. Peter and Paul Church, Endicott, NY.

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

"Know Your Faith" Catechesis Classes – Our first session will be Sunday, May 18 after coffee hour. All potential catechumens are expected to attend. All are welcome!

SAFETY – Please steer clear of the basement as work intensifies. You may still use the bathroom, but please avoid the kitchen area and debris.

Coffee Hour – Please consider sponsoring a meal after Liturgy. There are still some open slots. Sign up [here](#) or on the list at Church.

PARISH NEEDS

Volunteers to help with regular cleaning of the Church & Maintenance work at the Hermitage

Prayer for others which is made gently and with deep love is selfless and has great spiritual benefit. It brings grace to the person who prays and also to the person for whom he is praying.

When you have great love and this love moves you to prayer, then the waves of love are transmitted and affect the person for whom you are praying and you create around him a shield of protection and you influence him, you lead him towards what is good.

When He sees your efforts, God bestows His grace abundantly on both you and the person you are praying for.

Saint Porphios