



ST OLYMPIA ORTHODOX CHURCH

POTSDAM, NEW YORK 13676

ORTHODOX CHURCH OF AMERICA
DIOCESE OF NY AND NJ



**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.**

The vehicle blessing poster at right is also attached as a .pdf file

Please print this and post it in your neighborhood public spaces.

Or you can pick up printed posters after services.

SAVE THE DATE!

Next Services

**Saturday, July 28th
Great Vespers
5:00 pm**

**Sunday, July 29th
Matins
9:30 am
(Summer hours)**

**Divine Liturgy
10:00 am**

at

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

All welcome!



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Vehicle Blessing

Sunday, August 5, 2018 at noon

Potsdam Civic Center

Market St. Parking Lot

This blessing service is for our Police Department, Fire Department and Rescue Squad and their fleets, and also everyone's vehicle of any kind. Bring your cars, bikes, motorcycles, ATVs... During this very short service, we will pray for the health and safety for all those on the roads, especially those who serve us and guard our safety!

St. Olympia Orthodox Church of Potsdam, NY, is young worshipping community under the Orthodox Church of America, Diocese of New York/New Jersey. Divine Liturgies are held every Sunday at 10 am with Great Vespers on Saturday at 5 pm. Find out more about us at <http://saintolympiaorthodoxchurch.org/>

While some events are held on the college campus, most liturgies are now celebrated in a private chapel and we cannot advertise its location because of zoning restrictions. If you would like to visit us please contact fatherpeter777@yahoo.com for location.



Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Gospel: Matthew 14:14-22

*Note: the following article has been written by an anonymous contributor.
It is included here by permission.*

The value of a thing often depends upon whose hands it's in, upon the person using it. A stick in my hands might keep away an unfriendly dog; a stick in Moses' hands will part the Red Sea. A slingshot in my hands is at best a toy and at worst a danger to myself; a slingshot in David's hand is a weapon to take down a giant. It depends on whose hands it's in.

Look, for example, at today's Gospel, Matthew 14:14-22. Jesus' hands take a few rolls of bread and a couple of dried fish; and His touch multiplies them to feed, not just 5000 men, but also all the women and children, who in those days in public ate separately from the men. And in the touch of Jesus' hands, we see the heart of the true and living God, a heart genuinely touched by human need.

But notice how this incident begins. Jesus withdraws by boat to a deserted place to be by Himself. He's been pressed on every side for days, weeks and months, with crowds of people not only following Him everywhere He goes, but all with outstretched hands, often grabbing hands, and pleading voices rising out of a sea of sorrow, sickness, sin and need. Everyone wanted something from Him, and He'd been giving to everyone who came. But now Jesus has an opportunity to be by Himself, to rest, to take a deep breath, to think and pray: no noise, no voices, no people, no demands; just to be alone for awhile. "But," says verse 13, "when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities." So much for some peace, quiet, and a day off!

Now we might expect Jesus (Who, don't forget, has a fully human nature just like ours) to get at least somewhat exasperated. But instead of getting angry or frustrated, says verse 14, "when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick." Jesus put aside His needs and ministered to the needs of those around him. What He wanted did not come ahead of what everyone else needed. He wasn't self-centered, but centered on the needs of those He loved, even though most of them were people He, in His human nature, did not know personally.

So Jesus ministered to the people all day. He listened to them; He healed them; and by the end of the day He must've been exhausted...and hungry, because everybody else was hungry, as the disciples made plain. These people lived near the edge of starvation at the best of times; but here, in the middle of nowhere? The disciples understood the situation, when they "came to Him, saying, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food.'" What these poor folks were supposed to use for money the disciples couldn't say, because they didn't much care. This was just a great way to off-load the problem onto someone else, get rid of the crowds, and have a little down time. No one would've questioned it.

But Jesus is having none of it. He turns to his disciples and says, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." The disciples started to panic, because, as they tell Jesus, "We have here only five loaves and two fish;" and what they had wasn't even theirs; John 6:9 tells us that it was "a lad," a boy, who had "five barley loaves and two small fish." And in any case, as Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, says to Jesus, "What are they among so many?" And here we come to the heart of the matter. The disciples, like everybody around them, lived in a small world of limited possibilities; but Jesus lived in a world of unlimited possibilities. They realized they had very limited resources; the crowd had seemingly unlimited need; so what the disciples had to offer wasn't even a drop in the bucket. But then Jesus, referring to the five loaves and two fish, says, "Bring them here to Me." Why? What could He possibly be thinking? Who would've dreamed what He was about to do? Certainly not the disciples, because even in the very next chapter where Jesus feeds another 4,000 people, the disciples seem perplexed about what to do, and wonder "Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?" Where indeed!

But are we so very different from those first disciples. How often, in our struggles, our needs, our worries, our fears, our sufferings, and in the struggles, needs and sufferings of the world around us, do you and I still see only the impossibilities, when God wants us to see possibilities? And why? Because we, like the disciples, keep thinking that the situation is in our hands. But it's not. Psalm 95:4 insists that "in [God's] hand are the deep places of the earth; the heights of the hills are His also;" from top to bottom every person and every situation is in His hands. And when things are in the hands of Him, the all-powerful and all-sovereign God, everything changes. We look at our meager resources and say to God: "But what are these among so many?" And He says to us, "Bring them here to me." He places His hands upon our pitiful resources and everything changes. What do we do when we face challenges obviously beyond our resources and abilities? Too often, we get frustrated, worried, panicky, instead of bringing God the offering of our meager resources, letting Him place His hands on our small gift, and cause it to grow thousands of times over. Despite our delusions to the contrary, we never have enough resources to meet all of people's needs, especially their deepest needs. We have nothing; but the good news is that we can bring our nothing to Jesus, and let Him turn it into something.

Jesus now "commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass." Then Jesus looks to heaven, says the usual grace, then starts breaking up the little loaves and the fish, and gives the pieces to the disciples to distribute to the people. Every time the disciples run out and need more, Jesus gives them more, until "they all ate and were filled," all 5000 adult men and as many as 10,000 women and children. Even then, after everybody was full, the disciples "took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained," 12 bushel-baskets of leftovers. Jesus provides an abundance: not only as much as they can eat, but more than they can eat. And the point Jesus is making to you and to me as much as to anybody else, is that the God we serve is a God of abundance, Who gives not just enough to meet our needs, but more than enough. While we're worrying about how enormous our need is, God is trying, not just to tell us, but to show us we need to sit and wait upon His abundance. As Psalm 23:5-6 confesses to God, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Now that's abundance, if we'll but wait for it.

But our Lord is also making to us the point that we have to be willing to surrender to Him our nothing in order to receive His something. During our Lord's temptation in the wilderness, says Matthew 4:3, "when the tempter came to [Jesus], he said, 'If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.'" The temptation was to use His power selfishly, only for Himself in His own immediate need; and it was a temptation to meet only the felt needs, the physical needs, of the human race, not our deeper spiritual needs of repentance and forgiveness and radical change. People then and now only wanted a Messiah who'd make life "better" for them, who'd make them politically free, economically prosperous, and happy. But Jesus needed to offer something more. He needed to give himself upon the Cross in order to give us something to make us really, truly, and eternally alive, alive to God.

And how often do we want a therapeutic gospel that will help us feel better, and make us feel safe and secure, without any effort, and especially without any change, on our part? We want better government; we want better marriages; we want our finances to improve so we will be more comfortable. We want God's material blessings but think little of what God really wants to bless us with. We need to realize what our real need is: to know God and to accept His gift of Jesus, the Bread of Life. We need to stop looking in all the wrong places for the things that we think we need. And above all else, we need to turn from fear to faith and simply take Jesus at His word when, in Matthew 6:25-23, He says, "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on...For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." That's the story: We're in the wilderness. We're hungry. We sit and wait. We trust. We're miraculously fed by the hand of Jesus. We discover that the food He offers is Himself. We eat...and finally, we find life.

Congratulations and best wishes to the Jessica Marie and Julio Gurrea, proud parents of little Alexander (right) who was born this morning, just a few hours before this bulletin was sent out. He joins his older bothers, Julian and Nicholas. We extend a loving welcome to the newest member of our parish!



**WALK or RUN with TEAM IOCC
at the Baltimore Running Festival**

October 20, 2018

All abilities welcome! Help those in need.
Kids Fun Run • 5K (Walk or Run) • Team Relay
Half Marathon • Full Marathon

REGISTER NOW

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