



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.**

**Your 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.**

Next Services

**Saturday, August 4th
Great Vespers
5:00 pm**

**Sunday, August 5th
Matins
9:30 am
(Summer hours)**

**Divine Liturgy
10:00 am**

at

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

**Followed by
Vehicle Blessing at
Potsdam Civic Center
parking lot at
noon!**

All welcome!

Fr. Peter and Vehicle Blessing in the media!

There were two wonderful articles in the news this past week, one in **North Country Now** and the other in the **Courier Observer**. The links are given below. To read the articles copy the links into your browser.

<http://northcountrynow.com/news/new-orthodox-priest-potsdam-st-olympia-church-0239288>

<http://www.mpcourier.com/dco/inaugural-blessing-of-vehicles-scheduled-for-aug-5-at-potsdam-civic-center-parking-lot-20180724&template=mdco>

The vehicle blessing poster is 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.

Parish Pilgrimage

Our Parish will make a Pilgrimage to the Dormition of the Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church in Ottawa, to celebrate Great Vespers for the feast day of their parish on Tuesday, August 14th. Carpools will leave at 1:30 pm. Their Greek Festival will be in full swing following the service! Friends and family welcome.

Phone Cindy Eyer at (315) 771-7579 or e-mail ceyer@twcny.rr.com to join the carpool group. You must have appropriate ID to cross into Canada.

Also, Divine Liturgy for the feast will be celebrated at St. Olympia Chapel on Wednesday, August 15th at 10 am.



Jessica Gurrea holds the latest addition to the family as Fr. Peter reads the prayer for the naming of a child on the eighth day:

O Lord our God, we entreat You, and we supplicate You, that the light of Your countenance be signed on this, Your servant Alexander, and that the Cross of Your Only-begotten Son be signed in his heart and understanding, so that he may flee from the vanity of the world and from every evil snare of the enemy, and may follow after Your commandments. And grant, O Lord, that Your holy name may remain unrejected by him and that, in due time, he may be joined to Your Holy Church, and that he may be perfected by the awesome Mysteries of Your Christ, so that, having lived according to Your commandments, and having preserved the seal unbroken, he may receive the blessedness of the elect in Your kingdom: By the grace and love for mankind of Your Only-begotten Son, with Whom You are blessed, together with Your Most-holy, Good and Life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 3:9-17

Note: the following article has been written by an anonymous contributor.

It is included here by permission.

When I was a kid, back in the early 1950s, a popular song was Tennessee Ernie Ford booming "You load 16 tons, and what do you get? Another day older and deeper in debt." As music morphed into the rock 'n' roll era, we heard that beautiful classic, "Get a job!" My point? Simple: whether we like it or loathe it, work is such an integral part of our life as humans that we even sing about it.

But work has always been an integral part of human life as a gift: God sharing with us the pleasure of caring for His creation, and sharing with us His creative purpose by allowing us to bring out the potential He placed within His creation. Genesis 2:15 says that "the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it." It was only when our first parents chose to distrust and disobey God, and sin entered our world to break God's beautiful creation, that work became such a chore. In Genesis 3:17-19, God spells out for Adam just how much damage Adam's sin had done. Not as a curse, but as a grieving spelling-out of the results of their sin, God says "Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread."

But in today's Epistle, 1 Corinthians 3:9-17, in Christ at least one kind of work becomes again a privilege rather than a pain. Beginning in verse 8, St. Paul assures us that "each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers." But if God means what He says, that He's going to reward us according to our labor in and for His Kingdom, we might wonder: "What reward do I and my work merit? What's the quality of my labor for the Lord?" Well, that depends on our answers to three other questions: "How deep is my dedication?" "Am I working hard and well with others?" and "Who's keeping the score?"

Firstly, how deep is my dedication? I admit it: I grumble about the work ethic (or, more accurately, the lack of work ethic) in young people today. The notion of working hard and of doing one's work well seems to be a thing of the past--although I suspect people my age have been saying that about people their age for the last 6,000 years. But what about my work ethic and your work ethic in the Kingdom of God? Is our dedication to loving God by serving God both in Himself in worship and obedience, and in others by loving service, deep enough to keep us faithful to worship, faithful to whatever tasks God sets us, and faithful just to living the Gospel in the everyday, even when those around us are ignoring God's will and principles, and are following the path of least resistance?

In Romans 14:16 St. Paul says something that seems a little odd: "Do not let your good [what you know to be good and the good that you do] be spoken of as evil." Huh? Well, think about it. Did you or I, even in our wildest dreams or nightmares, ever imagine there'd be a time when "family values" would become an object of ridicule and criticism? Did we ever think there'd come a time in our society when people who seek to save the life of an unborn baby would be laughed at, mocked, and/or painted as bigots? Did we ever imagine that gathering together for worship on a Sunday morning would be considered quaint or strange, and/or that actually taking a Sabbath rest one day a week would be "bad for business"? But the fact of the matter is that things which used to be considered good are now being called bad. And because we humans are made and meant for community, our tendency is (often quite unconsciously) to back off and back down, and to accept the majority opinion that living Christian faith and Christian values is at best odd.

Well, that isn't new or unique to our era. Satan always tries to twist those things that are good in God's sight and get society to condemn them as evil. Listen to what God says to His people in Malachi 3:13-17: "Your words have been harsh against Me," says the LORD. "Yet you say, 'What have we spoken against You?' You have said, 'It is useless to serve God. What profit it is that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked as mourners before the LORD of hosts? So now we call the proud blessed, for those who do wickedness are raised up; they even put God to the test and go free [get away with it].'" Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard them. So a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who heed them on His name. "They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "on the day that I make them My jewels." Those who feared the Lord and honored His name in Malachi's day refused to follow the path of least resistance; they refused to "go along to get along," but rather remained faithful despite the sneers and ridicule heaped upon them. As a result, God called them "My jewels [My treasured possession]." When God looks upon how you and me serve Him day by day, does He see "His jewels" or just cheap cut glass?

Then, secondly, am I working hard and well with others? We hear St. Paul's words, "We are God's fellow workers," but sometimes forget that God is not the only One we're supposed to be working with. Back in verses 6-8, the Apostle reminds us that "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God Who gives the increase. Now he who plants and he who waters are one." Paul refuses to take full credit or, indeed, any credit for the growth of the Church at Corinth, because as he explains later, in chapters 12-14, life in and as the Body of Christ is a cooperative effort, and one in which all the credits, all the glory, goes, not to me or you, but to God, because He alone is the One Who creates and nurtures His life within us.

There is nothing, absolutely nothing, of any eternal value which any one of us can do as a solo act. Someone once said, wisely, that "We're saved together; it's alone that we're lost." The sacramental life, for example, is the life and activity of the whole People of God. In Holy Baptism we welcome a new person into "the household of faith" as "by one Spirit" they are "baptized into one body." Even something so seemingly individual as the Mystery of Repentance, commonly called Confession, is the presbyter acting, not only on the authority of Christ to forgive sin, but also on the authority of the whole Body of Christ, extending the community's forgiveness too. The great growth of the early church recorded in the 2nd chapter of Acts was not the result of any one person's work; the entire group worked and prayed together. Listen to Acts 2:44-47: "Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people." The result? "And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." That's why later, in 1 Corinthians 12:7, after listing various spiritual gifts, St. Paul insists that "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all [for the common good]." If this or any other parish is going to live the life of God, grow in the grace of God, and do the work of God, its people have to work together, each willingly doing our part. As the Apostle teaches us in Ephesians 4:16, it's only "the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share" which "causes the growth of the body for the edifying [building-up] of itself in love."

Lastly, who's keeping the score? Contrary to cynics who speak sneeringly of all Christians as "hypocrites," most of us really do try to actually live out the Gospel we profess. But we're still sinners in the process of being made whole; so we still sin, we still mess up. And because we mess up, we can get to thinking that our failures make us worthless to God. But God looks on the inside of our hearts instead of on our sometimes careless actions. Matthew 26:74-75 records that while his Lord was on trial before the Sanhedrin, the apostle Peter "began to curse and swear" that he didn't know this Jesus guy. But "immediately a rooster crowed. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus Who had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' So he went out and wept bitterly." Like Judas, perhaps worse than Judas, Peter also betrayed Jesus. But that's not the end of his story, is it? In Mark 16:7, the angel tells the Myrrh-bearing Women to "go, tell His disciples and Peter" that Jesus was risen. And in John 21:15-18, the risen Jesus extends to Peter not only forgiveness but restoration as, for each of Peter's three denials, Jesus asks him, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" and accepts Peter's tearful answer, "Lord, you know that I love You." Peter was not a write-off, and neither are we, because our failures never have to be our whole story. In spite of our messing up, He still asks, "Do you love Me?" What's your answer--and mine--today?